

**TERTULLIAN'S UNDERSTANDING OF  
DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE**

**Volume I**

**by**

**JENNIFER MORAG IMRIE**

**Ph.D**

**Edinburgh University  
Department of Ecclesiastical History  
September 1991**



To my parents for their undying love,  
to Auntie Jessie for her unshakable faith  
and to Jill and Carron  
for their unfailing friendship.  
To each of them, my love.



# **DECLARATION**

I hereby affirm that this thesis (submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy) is entirely my own work.

Jennifer Morag Imrie

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## ABSTRACT

"The blood of the Christians is the seed". This aphorism regarding the "seed" of the Church is probably Tertullian's most memorable assertion regarding death. However, it would be misleading, indeed dangerously simplistic to confine his reflections on death to the theme of "bearing witness".

The thesis seeks to demonstrate the complexity of Tertullian's reflections on death. Taking as its point of departure the physical phenomenon itself, the thesis explores, in turn, the six most prominent themes within the Tertullianic understanding of death. The said themes are death as a physical phenomenon, death as the imitation of Christ, death as a teaching medium, death as the culmination of man's conflict with the powers of evil, death as the ultimate sacrifice and death as the gateway to the hereafter.

Did Tertullian regard death as "natural"? Did he formulate a "scientific" theory of death and putrefaction? Can a vision of discipleship which primarily focusses upon the motifs of "indebtedness" and "enslavement" be characterised as a genuine expression of "imitatio Christi"? Did Tertullian regard the shedding of blood as a symbol of "life" given over to death or did he simply regard it as a symbol of "death" and "violence"? Was his concept of martyrdom modified by his memories of the sacrificial demands of the Romano-Punic deities, Ba'al Hammon/Saturn and

Tanit/Caelestis? These are but a few of the questions addressed by the thesis.

The thesis also seeks to question the traditional view that it was the motifs of "witness" and "imitatio Christi" which lay at the heart of Tertullian's reflections on death. Whether it be the "natural" death of the ordinary Christian or the "unnatural" death of the extraordinary Christian (that is, the martyr) Tertullian's reflections on death are profoundly imbued with, indeed dominated by, his distinctive "brand" of demonology, eschatology and sacrificial theory.

Finally, the thesis seeks to interpret the motifs which figure in Tertullian's reflections on death against their contemporary context, that is, it attempts to perceive them as they might well have appeared to his original readers. Thus, it proposes not simply that the motif of the "servant of God" cannot properly be understood divorced from the ancient institution of human slavery but that the motifs of the divine "athlete" and the Christian "victim" must be interpreted within the context of sport and sacrifice - sport and sacrifice as they manifested themselves in late second-century and early third-century Carthage. The Tertullianic martyr was, in a very real sense, the heir both to the pankriatists and to the blood-wrung victims (be they human or animal) of Ba'al-Hammon/Saturn and Tanit/Caelestis.

The "blood" of the Christians may have been the "seed" of the Church but in the eyes of Tertullian, that blood was far more than a simple act of "witness" - it was the public

manifestation of an extremely complex phenomenon, the phenomenon by which the Christians sought to offer their love, their loyalty and their unshakable fidelity to their God.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my three supervisors - Mr David Wright, Doctor Noel O'Donoghue and Doctor Bruce McCormack - for the time, care and attention which they have bestowed upon my work in the last years. I would particularly like to thank Father Noel for the support and encouragement which he showed to me in the difficult early days. I also wish to thank Professor Cheyne and Professor Brown for their advice and encouragement throughout. As for the departmental secretary, Miss May Hocking, her kindness, approachability and support have been unfailing.

I am extremely grateful to Miss Betty McLellan and Miss Jill Munro - the former for giving me a "crash course" in the niceties of English syntax, the latter for typing the Greek quotations on the M.L.S. system at New College. I am also indebted to the staff of New College Library, particularly Mrs Norma Henderson, for bearing patiently with my problems and panics and to my typist, Mrs Jane Gough, for still more patiently bearing with extremely untidy scripts!

Then there is my debt to my old school, Cranley (16 Spylaw Road, Edinburgh). With all my heart, I would like to thank my teachers for their understanding and encouragement - the understanding and encouragement which enabled a frightened child to develop in confidence and proceed to University.

Last and by no means least, I wish to record formally my gratitude to my parents for their unfailing support throughout my University career. Without them, this thesis would never have been submitted.

## THE CHRONOLOGY OF TERTULLIAN'S WORKS

The task of dating Tertullian's works is extremely complex. Here I have attempted to come to a balanced conclusion in the light of the detailed studies of leading scholars.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the complexity of dating Tertullian's works is matched by the complexity of dating precisely his conversion to Montanism (that is, "charismatic" Catholicism). T.D. Barnes observes:

"It may well be ... that Tertullian retouched two passages in I-III at the same time as he added the massive books IV and V ... But, if that is so, then *Aduersus Marcionem* I no longer ties Tertullian's first datable manifestation of Montanism to 207-208: on the contrary, the Montanist passage in the book was written after that date."<sup>2</sup>

It is possible, therefore that Tertullian's earliest Montanist works may be dated slightly later than 207-208.

(I) Catholic works.

- 197        Ad Martyras  
            Ad Nationes I and II  
            Aduersus Iudaeos  
            Apologeticum
- 198-206   De Testimonio Animae  
            De Praescriptione Haereticorum  
            Aduersus Hermogenem  
            De Spectaculis  
            De Oratione  
            De Baptismo  
            De Patientia
- 200-202   De Carne Christi
- 202        De Cultu Feminarum I and II
- 203-206   De Idololatria  
            Scorpiace
- 204        De Paenitentia  
            Ad Uxorem I and II

(II) Montanist works.

- 207-208   Aduersus Marcionem I - IV<sup>3</sup>
- 208-212   Aduersus Ualentinianos  
            De Anima  
            De Resurrectione Mortuorum  
            Aduersus Marcionem V  
            De Exhortatione Castitatis  
            De Uirginibus Uelandis
- 211        De Corona
- 212        Ad Scapulam
- 213        De Fuga in Persecutione

Aduersus Praxean

- 214-215    De Monogamia<sup>4</sup>
- 217        De Ieiunio aduersus Psychicos
- De Pudicitia
- De Pallio

**References : Chronology**

1. C. Rambaux, Tertullien Face aux Morales, Paris, 1979, pp.425-426, T.D. Barnes, Tertullian: a Historical and Literary Study, Oxford, 1985, pp.30-56 and 325-326, J.C. Fredouille, Tertullien et la Conversion de la Culture Antique, Paris, 1972, pp.487-488 and R. Braun, "Un Nouveau Tertullien: Problèmes de Biographie et de Chronologie", Rev. Ét. Lat., 50, 1972, pp.67-84.
2. Barnes, Tertullian, pp.327-328.
3. J.C. Fredouille, "Aduersus Marcionem I 29: Deux États de la Rédaction du Traite", Rev. Ét. Aug., 13, 1967, pp.1-13 demonstrates that the first redaction of Marc. I - III may have been as early as 198 A.D.
4. P. Mattei, Tertullien : le Mariage Unique, Paris, 1988, pp.13-23.

## CITATIONS FROM SOURCE MATERIAL - THE SYSTEM EMPLOYED

By and large, my citations from source material have noted the chapter, the paragraph and the lines. Where appropriate, the number of the book has also been included. Thus, De Cultu Feminarum, book one, chapter one, paragraph two, lines fifteen to twenty-one becomes Cult. I. 1:2, 15-21.

However, where editions have not provided paragraph numbers - as with the works of Origen - I have substituted the page number for the paragraph number. Thus, Origen's Eis Marturion Protrepitkos, chapter thirty, page two hundred and ninety-three, lines one to fourteen becomes Mart. Prot. 30:293, 1-14. As for the classical authors, they are cited simply by chapter and paragraph.



## ABBREVIATIONS

### (I) Tertullian's works.

<u>Anim.</u>	<u>De Anima.</u>
<u>Apol.</u>	<u>Apologeticum.</u>
<u>Bapt.</u>	<u>De Baptismo.</u>
<u>Carn.</u>	<u>De Carne Christi.</u>
<u>Cast.</u>	<u>De Exhortatione Castitatis.</u>
<u>Cor.</u>	<u>De Corona.</u>
<u>Cult.</u>	<u>De Cultu Feminarum.</u>
<u>Fug.</u>	<u>De Fuga in Persecutione.</u>
<u>Herm.</u>	<u>Aduersus Hermogenem.</u>
<u>Idol.</u>	<u>De Idololatria.</u>
<u>Ieuin.</u>	<u>De Ieiunio aduersus Psychicos.</u>
<u>Iud.</u>	<u>Aduersus Iudaeos.</u>
<u>Marc.</u>	<u>Aduersus Marcionem.</u>
<u>Mart.</u>	<u>Ad Martyras.</u>
<u>Monog.</u>	<u>De Monogamia.</u>
<u>Nat.</u>	<u>Ad Nationes.</u>
<u>Orat.</u>	<u>De Oratione.</u>
<u>Paen.</u>	<u>De Paenitentia.</u>
<u>Pall.</u>	<u>De Pallio.</u>
<u>Pat.</u>	<u>De Patientia.</u>
<u>Praes.</u>	<u>De Praescriptione Haereticorum.</u>
<u>Prax.</u>	<u>Aduersus Praxean.</u>
<u>Pud.</u>	<u>De Pudicitia.</u>
<u>Resurr.</u>	<u>De Resurrectione Mortuorum.</u>

<u>Scap.</u>	<u>Ad Scapulam.</u>
<u>Scorp.</u>	<u>Scorpiace.</u>
<u>Spect.</u>	<u>De Spectaculis.</u>
<u>Test.</u>	<u>De Testimonio Animae.</u>
<u>Ual.</u>	<u>Aduersus Ualentinianos.</u>
<u>Uirg.</u>	<u>De Uirginibus Uelandis.</u>
<u>Uxor.</u>	<u>Ad Uxorem.</u>

(II) Primary material (excluding Tertullian).

<u>Act. Max.</u>	<u>Acta Maximiliani.</u>
<u>Ad Marc.Consol.</u>	<u>De Consolatione ad Marciam.</u>
<u>Ad Poly.Consol.</u>	<u>De Consolatione ad Polybium.</u>
<u>Ad. Haer.</u>	<u>Aduersus Haereses.</u>
<u>Aen.</u>	<u>Aeneid.</u>
<u>Apol.</u>	<u>Apologia.</u>
<u>Apost. Parad.</u>	<u>Apostolikē Paradosis.</u>
<u>Arch.</u>	<u>Peri Archōn/De Principiis.</u>
<u>Barn. Ep.</u>	<u>Barnaba Epistolē.</u>
<u>Bibl. Hist.</u>	<u>Bibliothēkēs Historikēs.</u>
<u>Ciuit. Dei.</u>	<u>De Ciuitate Dei.</u>
<u>Ekk. Hist.</u>	<u>Ekklesiastikēs Historias.</u>
<u>Enarr. in Ps.</u>	<u>Enarrationes in Psalmos.</u>
<u>Eph.</u>	<u>Pros Ephesious Ignatios.</u>
<u>Herm. Past.</u>	<u>Hermae Pastor.</u>
<u>Hom. Num.</u>	<u>In Numeros Homilia.</u>
<u>Imit.</u>	<u>Imitatio Christi.</u>
<u>Kels.</u>	<u>Pros ton Epigegrammon Kelsou Alēthē Logon Ōrigenous.</u>
<u>Mart. Louq.</u>	<u>Marturiou tōn en Louqdounō Teleiōthenton.</u>
<u>Mart. Pol.</u>	<u>Marturion tou Hagiou Polukarpou.</u>
<u>Mart. Prot.</u>	<u>Eis Marturion Protreptikos.</u>
<u>Min.</u>	<u>Minōs.</u>
<u>Moral.</u>	<u>Moralia.</u>

<u>Pal. Mart.</u>	<u>Eusebiou tou Pamphilou Peri tōn en Palaistinēi Marturēsantōn.</u>
<u>Pass. Mar. et Iac.</u>	<u>Passio Sanctorum Mariani et Iacobi.</u>
<u>Pass. Mont. et Luc.</u>	<u>Passio Sanctorum Montani et Lucii.</u>
<u>Pass. Perp.</u>	<u>Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis.</u>
<u>Phaid.</u>	<u>Phaidōn.</u>
<u>Phil.</u>	<u>Philadelphousin Ignatios.</u>
<u>Pro Arch.</u>	<u>Pro Archia Poeta.</u>
<u>Pro Cluen.</u>	<u>Pro Cluentio.</u>
<u>Pro Sext.</u>	<u>Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino.</u>
<u>Pun.</u>	<u>Punica.</u>
<u>Rhom.</u>	<u>Rhōmaiois Ignatios.</u>
<u>Shew.</u>	<u>Shewinges.</u>
<u>Smur.</u>	<u>Smurnaiois Ignatios.</u>
<u>Strom.</u>	<u>Klēmentos Tōn kata tēn Alēthē Philosophian Gnōstikōn Hupomnēmatōn Strōmateōn Prōtos.</u>
<u>Theog.</u>	<u>Theogonia.</u>
<u>Trall.</u>	<u>Trallianois.</u>

(III) Secondary Material

<u>A.F.L. Nice.</u>	<u>Annales de la Faculte des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Nice.</u>
<u>A.G.M.</u>	<u>Archives Générales de Medicine.</u>
<u>A.P.C.</u>	<u>Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne.</u>
<u>Aev.</u>	<u>Aevum.</u>
<u>Ant. Christ.</u>	<u>Antike und Christentum.</u>
<u>Aug.</u>	<u>Augustinianum.</u>
<u>B.A.G.B.</u>	<u>Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé.</u>
<u>Bib. Arch. Rev.</u>	<u>Biblical Archaeology Review.</u>
<u>Burg.</u>	<u>Burgense.</u>
<u>C.A.D.P.</u>	<u>Centre d'Analyse et de Documentation Patristique.</u>
<u>C.W.</u>	<u>The Classical World.</u>
<u>Ch. Hist.</u>	<u>Church History.</u>
<u>Con.</u>	<u>Concilium.</u>
<u>D.A.C.L.</u>	<u>Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie.</u>
<u>D.T.C.</u>	<u>Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique.</u>
<u>E.T.</u>	<u>The Expository Times.</u>
<u>Esp.</u>	<u>Espiritu.</u>
<u>H.T.R.</u>	<u>Harvard Theological Review.</u>
<u>Helm.</u>	<u>Helmantica.</u>
<u>J.A.</u>	<u>Journal Asiatique.</u>
<u>J.E.H.</u>	<u>Journal of Ecclesiastical History.</u>
<u>J.Q.R.</u>	<u>Jewish Quarterly Review.</u>

<u>J.T.S.</u>	<u>Journal of Theological Studies.</u>
<u>Karth.</u>	<u>Karthago : Revue d'Archeologie Africaine.</u>
<u>M.R.</u>	<u>Maynooth Review.</u>
<u>Mus. Helv.</u>	<u>Museum Helveticum.</u>
<u>N.C.E.</u>	<u>New Catholic Encyclopaedia.</u>
<u>P.P.</u>	<u>Past and Present.</u>
<u>Pen.</u>	<u>Pensiero.</u>
<u>R.S.L.R.</u>	<u>Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa.</u>
<u>Rec. Sc. Relig.</u>	<u>Recherches de Science Religieuse.</u>
<u>Rech. Aug.</u>	<u>Recherches Augustiniennes.</u>
<u>Rev. Ét. Aug.</u>	<u>Revue des Études Augustiniennes.</u>
<u>Rev. Ét. Lat.</u>	<u>Revue des Études Latines.</u>
<u>Rev. Hist. Ecc.</u>	<u>Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique.</u>
<u>Rev. Sc. Relig.</u>	<u>Revue des Sciences Religieuses.</u>
<u>Riv. Arch. Chr.</u>	<u>Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana.</u>
<u>Riv. Stud. Fen.</u>	<u>Rivista di Studi Fenici.</u>
<u>S.C.</u>	<u>Second Century : a Journal of Early Christian Studies.</u>
<u>Sal.</u>	<u>Salesianum.</u>
<u>Stud. Mag.</u>	<u>Studi Magrebini.</u>
<u>Vig. Christ.</u>	<u>Vigiliae Christianae.</u>
<u>Z.K.G.</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte.</u>

## **INTRODUCTION**

## INTRODUCTION

Death - the inescapable fate of each member of mankind, is a subject of great relevance and therefore great potential interest to men and women - albeit that the interest is frequently coloured by trepidation and even terror. In periods of religious conflict (when men and women are called upon to lay down their lives for the sake of their beliefs) that interest must be particularly acute.

This thesis seeks to examine and to comprehend the understanding of death and the afterlife of one theologian - a theologian who lived during a period of intense religious conflict, that is, the late second and early third centuries A.D. - Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, better known perhaps as Tertullian of Carthage. It does not seek to examine contemporary burial practices, be they pagan or Christian (that has already been successfully accomplished by Victor Saxer in Morts, Martyrs, Reliques<sup>1</sup>) nor does it seek to draw out the implications of the metaphors of death as they are to be found in the works of Tertullian (that would require, to do it justice, a thesis in itself). What this thesis does seek to do is to focus upon Tertullian's theology of death and attempt to understand the themes and the motifs which characterise that theology.

I make no apology for employing the phrase "the theology of death" within an ecclesiastical history thesis. Given the eschatological goal towards which both Tertullian's teaching on death and his moral teachings in general consciously



strove, it is difficult to see how his reflections on death can be categorised as anything less than a theology. Moreover, given the crucial role of ideas in inspiring the actions of mankind, it would seem unreasonable to exclude historical theology from a study of ecclesiastical history.

The thesis takes as its starting point Tertullian's reflections upon death as a physical phenomenon - the physical phenomenon itself is the stark reality from which no thinker who speculates upon the meaning of death can escape. The thesis goes on to assess the relative importance of five major themes which played their part in Tertullian's theology of death. Those themes are the imitation of Christ, the offering of testimony, the conflict with the powers of evil, the sacrificial self-offering and the eschatological end towards which the life of the individual is moving. (On those occasions where I may appear to digress from the discussion of death itself, my intention is to throw light upon Tertullian's understanding of death by examining in detail the contemporary background of one of the metaphors or motifs which he employed).

The logic underlying my ordering of the chapters of the thesis is twofold. Firstly, I sought to commence with the reality which confronted Tertullian, that is, physical death and to conclude with the goal towards which all his reflections upon death tended, that is, the divinely promised hereafter. Secondly, I sought to examine how far themes which might be expected to be found at the heart of Tertullian's theology of death (that is, the motifs of

bearing "witness" and of "imitating" Christ) really were so placed and then having so to speak cleared the ground, to examine in detail the themes which I believe were crucial for that theology - that is, demonology, sacrificial theory and eschatology.

In turning to Tertullian's works to examine in detail his understanding of death, I shall focus on his own words - seeking the while to appreciate the implications of his choice of metaphors and to determine whether or not his theology of death was intellectually coherent.

## **References : Introduction**

1. V. Saxer, Morts, Martyrs, Reliques, Paris, 1980.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **DEATH AS A PHYSICAL PHENOMENON**

## 1. DEATH AS A PHYSICAL PHENOMENON

Where life expectancy is short<sup>1</sup>, man's awareness of death tends to be strong. For Tertullian, a citizen of third century Carthage, this was certainly the case. Epidemics and outbreaks of famine had heightened his awareness that death was the one reality from which there could be no escape. Thus, in Anim. 30:4, 27-29, he unashamedly depicted famine and plague as mandatory checks upon population growth. What is more, as a member of the Christian community at Carthage, Tertullian had to face up to the slaughter of a significant number of his brethren by the pagan authorities.<sup>2</sup> Against such a background, his own preoccupation with and search for the meaning of death becomes understandable and indeed reasonable.

As A.A.T. Ehrhardt saw in the case of Origen,<sup>3</sup> a preoccupation with physical death does not necessarily lead to an atmosphere of gloom and despondency. When he is constantly confronted by death, the Christian is encouraged to concentrate upon the joys which awaited him in the next world and therefore, to encounter his martyrdom with eagerness and courage. Thus, for Tertullian, the immediacy of physical death was the soil from which sprang his elaborate theological interpretation of death and his intensely otherworldly response to the trials and tribulations of this life.

In his very frequent use of words for death, something of his preoccupation with the topic is apparent. He employed

the word "mors" some four hundred and eighty-nine times, the word "mortuus" two hundred and ninety-three times, the word "mori" one hundred and forty-five times, the word "perire" one hundred and thirty-two times and the word "obire" thirty four times.<sup>4</sup>

Statistics alone are, of course, inadequate to illustrate the impact of death upon the mind of Tertullian. Moreover, whilst it is true that the vast majority of his applications of these words are to be understood in their straightforward sense, Tertullian did use them occasionally in a metaphorical or an eschatological manner.<sup>5</sup> The significance of these particular uses is greater than their number might indicate. Both the metaphorical and the eschatological concepts drew their inspiration from the fact of physical death itself and divorced from that reality, they would have been devoid of meaning. The very choice of metaphor indicates and emphasises the extent to which third century Carthaginian society was preoccupied with death. Tertullian was a child of his age.

Preoccupied as he was with death, it was to be expected that Tertullian should have attempted to work out what death was and how it attacked man. This attempt to work through the meaning of physical death is the subject of this chapter.

### 1.1 Death as the separation of body and soul

"Proinde etsi uarii exitus mortis, ut est multimoda condicio causarum, nullum ita dicimus lenem, ut non ui agatur. Ipsa illa ratio operatrix mortis, simplex licet, uis est. Quid enim? Quae tantam animae et carnis societatem,

tantam a conceptu concretionem sororum  
substantiarum diuellit ac dirimit"  
(Anim. 52:3, 17-22)

and

"Perinde auriga corporis, spiritus animalis,  
deficiens uectaculi nomine, non suo deficit, opere  
decedens, non uigore, actu elanguens, non statu,  
constantiam, non substantiam decoquens, quia  
comparere cessat, non quia esse."  
(Anim. 53:3, 25-28).

As Anim 52:3, 17-22 and Anim 53:3, 25-28 make clear, it is  
as the power which enforces the separation of his body and  
his soul that man first encounters death. Indeed, for  
Tertullian, the essence of "life" is the "union" of body and  
soul, the essence of death is nothing less than their  
severance. According to Anim. 27:3, 11-14, the acceptance  
of the one presupposition inexorably entails the acceptance  
of the other presupposition:

"Porro uitam a conceptu agnoscimus, quia animam a  
conceptu uindicamus; exinde enim uita, quo anima.  
Pariter ergo in uitam compinguntur quae pariter in  
mortem separantur."

Life is defined as the presence of the soul within the  
flesh. Death is characterised as the absence of the soul.  
In this way, Tertullian's strict adherence to the  
traducianist<sup>6</sup> theory of conception (the theory whereby flesh  
and soul come into being simultaneously at the moment of  
conception) added logic and intellectual depth to his  
understanding of death as its most basic level.

A more detailed examination of the vocabulary employed by  
Tertullian, in Anim. 52:3, 17-22 and 53:3, 25-28, reveals  
several interesting characteristics of physical death.  
Firstly death means the agonising disentanglement of two

intimate and mutually dependent substances. Through words such as "soror", "societas", "uectaculum" and "concretio", Tertullian voiced the extent of the intimacy which prevails between body and soul. Through words such as "diuellere", "dirimere", "deficere" and "decedere", he hinted at the involuntary nature of the soul's departure and the anguish caused by that enforced withdrawal. Whether he adopted the metaphor of the law court or that of the circus, the impression of the tearing asunder of two conjugal substances remained constant throughout.

If it is recalled that, according to Tertullian, the association of the soul and the flesh is so intimate that during their life together they are mutually responsible for each other's failings, his choice of vocabulary was entirely to be expected. Passages which depict death as the severance of body and soul must be read in the light of Paen. 3:4, 13-3:6, 24 and Resurr. 14:10, 34-15:8, 35. There Tertullian attested the mutual responsibility of body and soul. The soul is accountable for the sins of the body and vice-versa.<sup>7</sup> In the degree of intimacy, there is to be found the cause of the wretchedness.

Secondly, if the extracts in question are indicative of Tertullian's understanding of death as disentanglement, Anim. 52:3, 17-22 also points to the fact that he envisaged death as a personified force. Therein, Tertullian referred to "operatrix mortis". Such a designation can only have served to confirm the highly personified concept of death as



"the predator" which he propounded in Marc. IV. 20:5, 20-21 and Resurr. 54:4, 18-54:5, 25.

1.1.1      The medical grounds for the separation of body and soul

Despite his theological assumption that the primary cause of death is sin, Tertullian would have conceded that the specific medical grounds for the severance of body and soul are numerous. Given the idiosyncratic nature of the individual and the size of the population, this is inevitable.

Phrased in modern terminology, the medical grounds of death which Tertullian mentioned include heart disease, liver failure, disorders of the blood and strokes. One must, however, beware when transposing his thought into modern categories that one does not do so at the expense of losing the contemporary connotations; his precise words carry their own message:

"Nam quisquis ille exitus mortis, sine dubio aut materialium aut regionum aut uiarum uitalium euersio est : materialium, ut fellis, ut sanguinis; regionum, ut cordis, ut iecoris; uiarum, ut uenarum, ut arteriarum."  
(Anim. 53:2, 12-16).

When Tertullian referred to "materials", it is surely significant that the two which he chose to mention were an integral part of the Hippocratic theory of the "four humours" - that is, blood and bile. When he referred to the veins and the arteries as the "channels of vitality, it is

crucial to recollect that within contemporary medical theory, it was the veins which carried nutrition throughout the body in the form of blood; the arteries carried only the "vital spirit".<sup>8</sup> To conflate the thought world of Tertullian and his contemporaries with that of the modern era would be disastrous.

For Galen, a physician who was almost a contemporary of Tertullian, apoplexy was the result of the flow of "cerebral pneuma" within the brain being cut off whilst a heart attack was the result of an imbalance of the four humours within the body and the loss of "vital heat" within the left ventricle.<sup>9</sup> Where the modern mind is inclined to look to anatomical malfunction for the explanation of diseased organs, the mind schooled in ancient medicine was more likely to have found the explanation in an imbalance among the constituents of the body itself, that is, in an imbalance of the humours (dyskrasia).<sup>10</sup> Tertullian's precis of the medical causes of death, in Anim. 53:2, 12-16, rested upon a complex body of medical opinion. Whilst the extent to which he consciously drew upon that body of opinion has yet to be determined,<sup>11</sup> it is reasonable to conclude that many of the more educated amongst Tertullian's original readers would have been familiar with it.

At first sight, the modern mind attempting to unravel Tertullian's cursory ventures into the field of medicine is struck by the extent to which his understanding of disease and physical disorder was grounded upon concepts of "region" and "collapse". Indeed, according to Anim. 53:2, 12-13, the

diverse causes of death can be summarised under the heading "destruction" - the "destruction" of a "region" within the body, the "destruction" of one of its "substances" or the "destruction" of one of its "passages". The significance of this emphasis upon concepts of "region" and "collapse" comes over strongly in Anim. 53:3, 16-21 :

"Dum igitur haec ex propria quaque iniuriae causa uastantur in corpore ad usque ultimam euersionem et rescissionem uitalium, id est naturalium, finium situum officiorum, necessario et anima dilabentibus paulatim instrumentis et domiciliis et spatiis suis paulatim et ipsa migrare compulsa deducitur in deminutionis effigiem".

By words such as, "situs", "instrumentum", "domicilium" and "spatium", whose connotations are those of "location", Anim. 53:3, 16-21 succeeds in underlining the role of the actual organs and bodily structures in the collapse of the flesh.<sup>12</sup> By words such as, "dilabi", "migrare" and "compellere", the extract in question indicates that the withdrawal of the soul from the flesh is an enforced withdrawal, a withdrawal occasioned by the structural failure of its dwelling. It is significant that the verb which Tertullian chose to denote this structural failure, "dilabi" means "to fall asunder", "to fall to pieces", "to tumble down" or "to decay".

As a result of the priority which he gave to such concepts of "region" and "collapse", the reader is left with the impression that death is to be understood as the caving in of a corridor or a ceiling within a condemned building. This impression is reinforced by the fact that Tertullian regarded the flesh as nothing less than the "house" or "domicilium" of the soul.

Now, although the tendency to categorise illness in terms of "location" is endemic to any reflection upon disease per se, the picture of fatal illness drawn by Tertullian appears to be particularly simplistic. Symbolism seems to have replaced scientific theory. It all seems a far cry from the subtlety of the Hippocratic theory according to which the flesh was composed of blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile and the aim of the medical practitioner was to restore the due "krasis" (that is, blend), of those humours within the flesh by prescribing the appropriate diet, drugs, purges or blood-letting.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, to dismiss Tertullian's reflections upon the medical causes of death merely as the ravings of a confused amateur would be a mistake. His allusion to the substances of "blood" and "bile", in Anim. 53:2, 14-15, provides the reader with tantalising evidence that Tertullian subscribed to the theory of the "four humours". Then there is the extent to which he was indebted to the "Methodist" physician Soranus of Ephesus.

Indebted to Soranus for his understanding of gynaecology and for medical confirmation of his belief that the embryo is an animate being,<sup>14</sup> Tertullian may also have imbibed from thence the fundamental tenet of the "Methodist" school of medicine. This was the belief that all physical disorder can be classified under three headings; these are "obstruction", "flux" and the "mixed" condition of both obstruction and flux.<sup>15</sup> If Tertullian had indeed imbibed

this belief, this may be the key to elucidating Anim. 51:3, 12-14. (That passage with its reference to those modes of death which produce excessive "dryness" in the corpse would then be an allusion to the "Methodist" condition of "flux".) Plainly, his grasp of medical theory was greater than might be imagined at first sight.

Tertullian's attempt to elucidate the medical grounds of death as the separation of body and soul was that of the eclectic and the argumental opportunist. Where contemporary medicine could throw light upon the point at issue, he adopted its ideas. Indeed, because of his blatant opportunism, he simultaneously adhered to ideas which were the product of the rival "Dogmatist" and "Methodist" schools without difficulty or embarrassment.

Where the simplistic and metaphorical thought world of "location" and "collapse" could confer pictorial emphasis and could counter any suggestion that a residue of the soul lingered within the corpse,<sup>16</sup> Tertullian adopted that approach. (He was alive to the fact that concepts of "location" and "collapse" carry in their wake the idea that there is an unshakable bond between the afflicted part of the flesh and its "portion" of soul - in the words of Anim. 53:4, 32-33, "at ubi longa mors, prout deseritur anima, ita et deserit". The soul withdraws when its portion of the flesh becomes uninhabitable).

For Tertullian, technical medical knowledge and the more simplistic pictorial approach were simply the means to an

end; they were never the end in itself. He may have been an amateur dabbling in a foreign field but he was an amateur who was well able to appreciate when the sophisticated knowledge of the professional physician could serve his cause.

To understand Tertullian's eclectic relationship with ancient medicine, it is helpful to recall his attitude to the practices of the physicians themselves. Although his tendency to reduce disease and physical disorder to a question of "region" and "collapse" might lead one to suppose that he would have been interested in the study of human anatomy and sympathetic to any attempt to pursue that study, the opposite was in fact the case. Anim. 10:4, 7-22 and 25:5, 52-53 were unequivocal in their condemnation.<sup>17</sup> In the pursuit of anatomical knowledge, Herophilus of Chalcedon had performed dissections and perhaps even vivisections upon the human body.<sup>18</sup> Tertullian regarded him as little better than an ogre.

Tertullian's logic with respect to disease and disorder was flawed. On the one hand, he tended to associate physical disorder with the failure of "regions" of the body. On the other hand, he prohibited any attempt to deepen the physician's understanding of how those "regions" functioned.

1.1.2      The theological explanation for the separation of  
body and soul

Although Tertullian was prepared to recognise that the medical grounds for the severance of body and soul are manifold, or to put it another way, the secondary causes, he never lost sight of the fact that the primary cause is unvarying and universal. That cause is the proclamation of the Almighty - the proclamation to which Tertullian gave such weight in Resurr. 18:6, 25-26 and 52:17, 66-68. "'Terra es et in terram ibis'".<sup>19</sup> Death as the separation of body and soul is the direct consequence of the divine command that sinful man should return to "dust".

The absence of direct Biblical citations in Tertullian's discussions of the severance of body and soul must not blind the reader to the extent to which he gave them a theological underpinning. That theological underpinning shows itself in the assumptions which he made; it reveals itself in the statements which he did not require to justify.

One assumption which he made was that death is the divinely appointed penalty for original sin. Thus, when discussing the "opus mortis" in Anim. 52:2, 12-15, he declared:

"Porro non in mortem institutum eum probat ipsa  
lex condicionali comminatione suspendens et  
arbitrio hominis addicens mortis euentum. Denique  
si non deliquisset, nequaquam obisset."

The "work of death" is "separatio carnis atque animae."<sup>20</sup> Thus, such a separation is the direct consequence of sin. Of course, it is all too easy for the modern commentator to



overestimate the familiarity with the text of the Bible which Tertullian's original readers would have possessed.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the early Church's predilection for moral rigourism and its repeated strictures against sin suggest that the majority of his original readers would have recognised in the "conditional threat" the divine proclamation of Gen. 2:17.

Another assumption which he made was that it is the very instant of the final severance of body and soul which constitutes the actual moment of death. If the union of body and soul occurs at the moment of conception, death can be nothing less than the moment of their separation. (The traducianist interpretation of the origin of body and soul - the interpretation to the fore in Anim. 27:1, 3-5 and 27:4, 17-27:8, 51 - has as its logical corollary the recognition that death per se is the absence of the soul from that flesh). Hence, for Anim. 27:2, 6-8, life and death are complimentary - "si mors non aliud determinatur quam disiunctio corporis animaeque, contrarium morti uita non aliud definietur quam coniunctio corporis animaeque".

Taken together, these two assumptions mean that the ultimate reason for the separation of body and soul, or to phrase it in the words of Anim. 52:3, 19, the "ratio operatrix mortis", is none other than the divine ordinance against sin propounded in Genesis. It is the fulfilment of the threat made conditionally in Gen. 2:17 and of the decree pronounced formally and absolutely in Gen. 3:19.



In the light of this recognition of its theological foundations, the separation of the soul from the flesh becomes transformed from a purely medical phenomenon into a thoroughly theological one. For Tertullian, the specific physical disorder which causes a man's death is merely the divinely chosen means to a predestined end; that physical disorder is the tool for the outworking of Divine Providence.<sup>22</sup> As René Braun has highlighted, "prouidentia" entailed not merely "cette propriété de l'intelligence divine selon laquelle toutes choses sont d'avance connues par Dieu" but also "l'intervention constante, l'activité bienfaitrice de la divinité dans l'organisation et la marche du monde".<sup>23</sup>

If it is true that Tertullian's excursions into medicine were eclectic and somewhat confused, it was just because his overriding concern was with the theological authorisation for the severance of body and soul and with the compatibility of any medical theory with his preconceived theology. The soul is immortal and invisible.<sup>24</sup> Any medical interpretation of death had to start with that premise. Death is the outworking of the will of God. Medicine could never be allowed to obscure this.

#### 1.1.3 The corporeality of the soul and its impact on death

Anim. 53:3, 16-21, with its reference to the soul's gradual withdrawal from its "home" within the flesh, presents a highly realistic picture of that process. As each portion

of the flesh becomes uninhabitable and each working part fails to fulfil its function, the "part" of the soul which has dwelt there is driven into exile. This was more than an effective metaphor. For Tertullian, it was a statement of fact.

J.C. Fredouille has demonstrated Tertullian's indebtedness to classical culture in general and to Stoicism in particular:

"Quant à sa culture proprement dite, elle est vaste et profonde. Elle repose sur la lecture des grands textes classiques, ceux de Cicéron et Sénèque plus particulièrement, sur la méditation des thèmes fondamentaux de la pensée antique."<sup>25</sup>

That indebtedness included Tertullian's recognition that the soul is corporeal.<sup>26</sup>

The full ramifications of the corporeality of the soul come across in Anim. 9:4, 24-9:8, 64 where with the aid of a "convenient" Montanist vision, Tertullian announces that the fine, translucent "body" of the soul is identical in size, shape and form to the person's flesh. What is more, according to Anim. 9:8, 68-69, the "body" of the soul is endowed with "a tongue", "a finger" and "a bosom". The divine "breath" which was exhaled by the Almighty condensed within Adam's fleshy shell and took its shape from the configuration of that shell. To quote Anim. 9:7, 59-63:

"Per faciem statim flatum illum in interiora transmissum et per uniuersa corporis spatia diffusum simulque diuina aspiratione densatum omni intus linea expressum esse, quam densatus impleuerat, et uelut in forma gelasse".

Tertullian's choice of vocabulary is significant. With words such as "forma", "linea" and "spatium", he highlighted the fact that the divine "breath" had the contours of the flesh impressed upon it - just as if it had been poured into a mould. Is it simply a coincidence that the word "spatium" (the word used in Anim. 9:7, 61) is also used, in Anim. 53:3, 20, to describe the soul's withdrawal from its outposts in the flesh? It is surely significant that this reference to the "spaces" within the flesh being filled with the soul occurs with regard both to the creation and to the destruction of man.

If the tale of Dives and Lazarus provides authority for the view that the divine "breath" condensed to form "spiritual" counterparts of bosom, tongue and fingers, might Tertullian not have considered that that "breath" also condensed to form a "heart" and all the other organs? How can the soul be said to suffer anguish and remorse whilst it awaits the resurrection,<sup>27</sup> if it has no "heart" with which to undergo those emotions?

There was a precedent for situating the soul in the organs. Some of the "Dogmatic" physicians and philosophers had claimed that the "nutrative soul" resides in the liver.<sup>28</sup> By conferring on the soul a fine, translucent replica of the structures of the flesh, Tertullian took that claim at least one step further.

By taking the implications of the corporeality of the soul seriously, an interesting dimension is added to his concept

of the gradual withdrawal of the soul from the flesh. Convenient symbolism is transmuted into a record of reality. The find, translucent "body" of the soul literally does have to disentangle itself from the fibres of the liver, the kidneys and the heart. The muscles and the blood, in turn, do have to be deprived of their endowment of soul. Within such a context, the mental anguish which accompanied death becomes yet more poignant. The intimacy of body and soul is being ruptured in a very "physical" way.

Any such recognition of the impact of the corporeality of the soul upon Tertullian's theory of death carries with it awkward implications. The suggestion that the "body" of the soul disentangles itself from the muscles and the organs of the flesh encourages a fragmented view of the soul. For example, the "part" of the soul which resided in the liver appears to be distinct from that which resided in the heart. Although such an implication is an illusion - the "organs" of the soul being all part of the one "body" - it would have been a dangerous illusion in the eyes of Tertullian. An ultra-logical application of the corporeality of the soul also implies that since the soul has its own "organs", those organs ought to play some part in animating their fleshy counterparts. Acceptance of this implication challenges the view that the frailty of the flesh is responsible for man's demise and therefore would be at variance with Tertullian's own explanation of the withdrawal of the soul from the flesh. Rejection of this implication ignores his own recognition (in Resurr. 57:6, 19-27 and Anim. 53:3, 25-28) that it is the soul which animates the flesh. Although

Tertullian faced up to the question of whether the corporeality of the soul entailed its fragmentation at death, he never came to grips with the other issue raised.

Whilst acknowledging that in the theology of Tertullian the corporeal soul separates itself from the flesh gradually, it is crucial to recall that for Tertullian gradation did not imply fragmentation. By declaring that the soul withdraws from a given portion of the flesh after that portion has become incapable of fulfilling its proper function, he did not consider that the soul thereby became divided. As he asserted in Anim. 14:1, 1-5, and 22:2, 8-14, it was impossible that the soul should be other than "immortal" and "indivisible". Indeed, not only was the soul by nature "immortal" and "indivisible", these characteristics were actually interdependent. It is just because it is impervious to division decay that, the soul can be deemed "immortal". In the words of Anim. 14:1, 3-5:

"Si enim structilis et dissolubilis, iam non immortalis. Itaque quia non mortalis, neque dissolubilis neque diuisibilis. Nam et diuidi dissolui est et dissolui mori est".

Since a challenge to this axiom was unthinkable, Tertullian was forced to equivocate regarding the implications of his own admission that the withdrawal of the soul is often long-drawn-out. He was obliged to ignore the implications of his own claim that a truer vision of reality will be accorded to that "portion" of the soul which has abandoned its fleshy dwelling; he had to overlook the fact that that vision of reality will be articulated by the "part" of the soul which

still remains in the flesh.<sup>29</sup> Tertullian never faltered in his belief that the last "part" of the soul to leave the flesh remains united throughout with the mass which has gone before it.<sup>30</sup> To express this fusion in terms of a simile of which he might have approved, the soul flows out of the flesh like a stream; the flesh does not act as a dam to block the stream and to divide one flow of water from another.

Some of the difficulty can be removed by the recognition that the use of simile in language has its limitations but this recognition does not go far enough to reconcile the juxtaposition of the gradual withdrawal of the soul from the flesh and the indivisible character of the soul. There was a basic flaw in Tertullian's logic. The argument that the "last" of a thing is as much an integral part of that object as the "first", because the "whole" is incomplete without it, does not hold good. It is an empty exercise in "verbal acrobatics". Completeness and integrity are not to be confused with indivisibility. Tertullian was impervious to the contradiction. For him, ideology had overcome inconsistency.

#### 1.1.4 Is it "natural" for man to die?

In common with mainstream Christian tradition, there are, in the works of Tertullian, several themes which (on the surface at least) do not rest easily alongside the idea that death is "natural". Whilst the problems posed by these themes are more apparent than real, the themes themselves



are sufficiently prominent to warrant their being sketched out below. Firstly, Tertullian depicts death as a predator. Resurr. 54:4, 18-54:5, 25 provides an excellent example of this highly personified understanding of death - an understanding in which the principal characteristic of that personified being is its insatiable appetite. I quote:

"Ceterum mors merito in interitum deuoratur, quia et ipsa in hoc deuorat. 'Deuorauit', inquit, 'mors inualescendo', et ideo 'deuorata est in contentionem. Ubi est, mors, aculeus tuus? Ubi est, mors, contentio tua?' Proinde et uita, mortis scilicet aemula, per contentionem deuorabit in salutem quod per contentionem tuam deuorauerat mors in interitum".

Stalking and attacking their victims - these are the hallmarks of predators. Therefore, the primary connotations of any image which employs them must be those of the strength and rapaciousness of the marauder, not those of the inherent weakness of the victim. Applied to death, the initial impression is that death is an external force - an alien force.

Secondly, like so many theologians before and after, Tertullian recognises that initially death had not been part of the divine plan; death was simply the by-product of sin. Death is the penalty for sin - this is the clear message of such passages as Marc. II 4:5, 20-4:6, 9, Scorp. 5:10, 14-5:12, 21 and Anim. 52:2, 10-15. Indeed, according to Anim. 52:2, 10-15, if man had not sinned, he would never have died:

"Nam si homo in mortem directo institutus fuisset, tunc demum mors naturae adscriberetur. Porro non in mortem institutum eum probat ipsa lex

condicionali comminatione suspendens et arbitrio hominis addicens mortis euentum. Denique si non deliquisset, nequaquam obisset."

If God had not originally intended the masterpiece of His creation (that is, man) to die, can death be deemed to be entirely "natural"?

Thirdly, there are the implications inherent in the primordial creation of Adam. Although he is aware that the name "homo" was applied to the "clay" shell as it was moulded by the hands of the Almighty, Tertullian is adamant that "man" is neither "flesh" nor "soul" in isolation but the union of the two. The transformation of the "clay" shell into a "living soul" lies at the heart of his anthropology. (It is this transformation which is to the forefront in Resurr. 5:8, 41-42, 7:3, 13-15 and Marc. II. 4:4, 11-13). In Resurr. 5:8, 39-42 and 5:9, 43, Tertullian's immediate concern to uphold the "flesh" against its detractors must not blind the reader to its underlying message - the message that "man" is the totality of his body and his soul:

"'Et finxit deus hominem, limum de terra', - iam homo, qui adhuc limus - 'et insufflauit in faciem eius flatum uitae, et factus est homo', id est limus, 'in animam uiuam' ... Adeo homo figmentum primo, dehinc totus".

If man is the union of body and soul, can the dissolution of that union be regarded as anything less than an act of violence - a destruction of the creature as he was instituted by God?

Finally, there the implications of the Tertullianic understanding of the composition of man. Conceived in the



womb simultaneously - according to Anim. 27:1, 3-5 and 27:4, 17-27:8, 51 - the soul and the flesh share their experiences absolutely throughout life. It is only by means of the co-operation of the flesh that the soul can attain to righteousness and salvation (Resurr. 8:2, 4-8:6, 30). Neither the soul nor the flesh possess a purity or a guilt which is not also the responsibility and the work of the other.<sup>31</sup> Then, after such life-long intimacy, death shatters that partnership. Two substances which have never existed except in unison are torn asunder. Can such a rupture be interpreted otherwise than as an act of violence? As Resurr. 57:6, 21-25 instinctively perceived, in the absence of the soul the flesh is without value; a corpse is simply a cold, stiff, motionless husk. It was the soul which quickened it.

The violence which death entails, according to Tertullian, is confirmed by S. Vicastillo:

"En definitiva, no hay muerte sin violencia; aunque falte la violencia de fuera, como en la llamada muerte simple o comun, nunca falta esta otra violencia de fondo : la muerte es esencialment violenta."<sup>32</sup>

However, had he been challenged, Tertullian would have replied unambiguously that death is "natural". Death as predator symbolises mankind's horror in the face of death and its aspirations to immortality. Nevertheless, aspiring to immortality should not be confused with possessing immortality. Then there is the underlying premise upon which the assaults of the predator depends. Animal predators can kill their victims only because those victims

are capable of death. Similarly, death can fulfil its marauding purposes only because men are capable of death, that is, because men are mortal.

As for the intimacy of body and soul (from their primordial creation onwards) a distinction has to be made between an act being violent and an act being "unnatural". It is "natural" for carnivorous animals to kill their prey - responding as it does to their fundamental instinct to preserve their lives - yet from the perspective of their victims, such deeds are acts of violence. Moreover, a distinction has to be made between death causing an "unnatural" state (that is, the separation of body and soul) and death being itself "unnatural". God the Creator may have united body and soul - He may even have intended them to remain united (had man not lapsed into sin)<sup>33</sup> - but He also created man's flesh mortal. Thus, death simply feeds upon man's mortality.

The most important objections to the idea that death is "unnatural", however, surround death as the penalty for sin. The logical corollary of death as an "unnatural" phenomenon would be that man was created immortal. Tertullian would have rejected such a notion decisively. In his eyes, even before "our first parents" were beguiled into sin by the Serpent, man had been capable of dying.<sup>34</sup> Without that capability, the penalty for disobedience would have been meaningless and indeed impotent. An immortal being cannot be threatened with death. The author of Marc. II. 4:6, 27-4:6, 6 had no doubt that Adam was created capable of dying:

"Cuius legis obseruandae consilium bonitas pariter adscripsit : qua die autem ederitis, morte moriemini. Benignissime enim demonstraui exitum transgressionis, ne ignorantia periculi negligentiam iuuaret obsequii. Porro si legis imponendae ratio praecessit, sequebatur etiam obseruandae, ut poena transgressioni adscriberetur, quam tamen euenire noluit qui ante praedixit."

Man's mortality may have resulted in his death only because his deliberate disobedience disrupted God's plan but he had, from his first creation, been capable of dying. This is the message of Scorp. 5:10, 14-5:12, 21. Ieiun. 3:2, 5-3:3, 12, Anim. 52:2, 10-15 and Marc. II.4:6, 27-4:6,6. For a mortal being, death cannot be an alien phenomenon. Death is part of such a being's destiny.

Finally, the conclusion that, in Tertullian's eyes, death is a "natural" phenomenon is confirmed by his excursions into the "medical" causes of death. Anim. 53:2, 12-53:3, 27 with its affirmation that the departure of the soul from the flesh is the inevitable consequence of the collapse of its corporeal dwelling, implies that (given the composition of his flesh) death is the predetermined and indeed the logical fate of man.

When replying to the question whether or not it is "natural" for men to die, Tertullian would have admitted one answer only - a resounding affirmative.

The "natural" character of death was not the only connotation of death as the severance of body and soul. Death is also a form of "escape". Given that Tertullian was

a staunch defender of the merits of the flesh against the denigrations propounded by the Gnostics, this might appear to be a startling conclusion. How could the same man who had extolled the flesh to the extent of designating it the "sister" of Christ regard the soul's departure from the flesh as an "escape"? Surely, such language better befitted the lips of his Gnostic opponents? Resurr. 9:2, 7-11 with its passionate exaltation of the flesh seems to be entirely at odds with any suggestion that death was an "escape" from the flesh:

"Absit, absit, ut deus manuum suarum operam,  
ingenii sui curam, adflatus sui uaginam,  
molitionis suae reginam, liberalitatis suae  
heredem, religionis suae sacerdotem, testimonii  
sui militem, Christi sui sororem, in aeternum  
destituatur interitum."

It is in Tertullian's dual role as a theologian and a moralist that the explanation for this paradox is to be found. As a theologian, Tertullian was concerned to defend the goodness of God and the goodness of His creation.<sup>35</sup> As a moralist, he was conscious that the flesh is the seedbed of the illicit passions and the well-spring of worldliness.<sup>36</sup>

Against a background of pessimism regarding the nature of "fallen" man, it is easy to appreciate the attractive power exerted by the Platonic belief that for the wise man, death brings in its wake entry into the sphere of true knowledge.<sup>37</sup> That attractive power was all the stronger because, for the Christian moralist, the acquisition of true knowledge would have held the promise of true virtue. Anim.

53:6, 50-55 where the soul escapes from its incarceration within the flesh and replaces "images" with the truth was the ardent response of the moralist:

"Procul dubio cum ui mortis exprimitur de concrezione carnis et ipsa expressione colatur, certe de oppanso corporis erumpit in apertum ad meram et puram et suam lucem, statim semetipsam in expeditione substantiae recognoscit et in diuinitatem ipsa libertate resipiscit, ut de somnio emergens ab imaginibus ad ueritates".

"Lux", "libertas", and "ueritas" - by his adoption of such words Tertullian succeeded in transforming death from a dreadful blight into a desirable blessing. Such a transformation was in line with the rejection of the world which was fundamental to martyr theology. Only when death ceases to be seen as an alien and a threatening phenomenon will the martyr be encouraged to offer up his life.

As for the other implications of death as the severance of body and soul, they were closely associated with each other. On the one hand, such a theory drew attention to the fact that death attacks the flesh alone; the soul never dies. On the other hand, it underlines the fact that death downgrades the flesh to an empty shell.

Driven out of its increasingly dilapidated dwelling, the soul itself has not failed in its powers;<sup>38</sup> on the contrary, it has retained them in full. Indeed, the strength of the concept of "exclusion" is that its connotations are neither those of the enfeeblement nor those of the collapse of the soul. The immortality of the soul remains intact. In the

words of Resurr. 7:12, 55-56 - "sic etiam ipsum mori carnis est, cuius et uiuere".

The emphasis on the withdrawal of the soul also provides a cogent explanation for the void which prevails after death. The impression of emptiness created by a corpse is no illusion. Just as previously the presence of the soul quickened the flesh, its absence now ensures the corpse's lack of responsiveness. To quote Resurr. 57:6, 21-25:

"Quod corpus inlaesum, cum interemptum, cum frigidum, cum expallidum, cum edurum, cum cadauer? Quando magis homo debilis, nisi cum tutos, quando magis paralyticus, nisi cum immobilis?"

#### 1.2 Death as the onset of decomposition

"Ita 'nec corruptela', inquit, 'in corruptelam hereditati habebit', non ut carnem et sanguinem existimes corruptelam, quando ipsa sint potius obnoxia corruptelae, per mortem scilicet, siquidem mors est, quae carnem et sanguinem non modo corrumpit uerum etiam consumit"  
(Resurr. 51:4, 20-25)

and

"'Seminatur', inquit, 'in corruptela, resurgit in incorruptela: seminatur in dedecoratione, resurgit in gloria; seminatur in infirmitate, resurgit in uirtute; seminatur corpus animale, resurgit spiritale'. Certe non aliud resurgit quam quod seminatur, nec aliud seminatur quam quod dissoluitur humi, nec aliud dissoluitur humi quam caro. Hanc enim sententia dei elisit: 'terra es et in terram ibis', quia et de terra erat sumpta".  
(Resurr. 52:16, 61-52:17, 68).

Here, in Resurr. 51:4, 20-24 and 52:16, 61-52:17, 68, Tertullian's readers are brought face to face with the



unpalatable truth that death leads inexorably to the decomposition of the flesh within the grave. "Corruptela", "consumere" and "dissoluere", his repetition of such words highlights his profound awareness of this aspect of death. What is more, given that the original connotations of "corrumpere" were "to break to pieces", the very word "corruptela" underlines the noisome meaning of putrefaction.

Then there is his use of the "horticultural" vocabulary. "Humus", "terra" and "seminare", these words at one and the same time imply destruction and resurgence. Although their immediate overtones tend to be those of growth and resurgence, Tertullian was convinced that the growth of a plant could occur only after its seed had been destroyed ("dissolutio") by the action of the soil. Therefore, his reference to the flesh being "sown" in the "ground" must be read in the light of Marc. V. 10:5, 19-25 and Resurr. 12:4, 14-12:5, 22.<sup>39</sup>

Undoubtedly, his choice of vocabulary was governed and indeed curbed by the fact that in the former excerpt he was quoting directly from the Scriptures. Nevertheless, it is indicative of his own thought. Had he not considered that the terms used by Gen. 3:19, I Cor. 15:42-44 and I Cor. 15:50 accurately describe the work of death, he would have chosen different terminology.

Tertullian's propensity for cloaking his thoughts in the familiar phrases of the Bible must not be allowed to conceal

the brutal reality which he sought to express. The same is true of his recognition that death is merely the prelude to the resurrection. The ultimate reintegration of the flesh did not impair his heavily realistic understanding of death as decomposition. Man's flesh rots like putrid meat.

If it is true that for Hobbes "life" was "nasty", "brutish" and "short", it is undeniable that, for Tertullian, death was nasty and brutish. Not for him the "polite" euphemisms which obscure the true work of the grave. In Apol. 37:2, 8-10, he brought his readers face to face with the unpalatable sight of partially decomposed corpses, after they had been tossed out into public view by rampaging pagan mobs -

"nec mortuis parcut Christianis, quin illos de requie sepulturae, de asylo quodam mortis, iam alios, iam nec totos auellant, dissipent, distrahant".

In Ieiun. 12:2, 24-27, he displayed before their eyes the deceased's dry bones covered in a coating of shrivelled skin

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"cum sola et arida sit cute loricatus, et contra ungulas corneus, praemisso iam sanguinis suco tamquam animae impedimentis, properante iam et ipsa, quae iam saepe ieiunans mortem de proximo norit".

In Resurr. 42:8, 38-40, he referred in a casual aside to the grisly residue of bare bones and yellowing teeth which had been turned up by a recent Carthaginian building project - "constat non tantum ossa durare uerum et dentes incorruptos perennare".

Even those passages where Tertullian discussed examples of corpses which had retained certain life-like qualities,



project a gruesome realism. According to Anim. 51:2, 8-10, there were corpses whose hair and whose nails apparently had continued to grow. According to Resurr. 42:8, 35-39, there were corpses whose hair had retained its glossy sheen and whose bones had remained moist. Whilst he was careful to reject any suggestion that natural growth continued beyond death, in Anim. 51:3, 14-17, Tertullian clearly had no inhibitions about visualising in detail the state of corpses within the grave. He looked the horrors of death straight in the eye.

While his descriptions of death as decomposition were clear and unequivocal, however, his explanations of that phenomenon were often confused and ambiguous.

#### 1.2.1 The theological authority for death as decomposition

At the theological level, Tertullian stood his ground firmly and confidently. As with the separation of body and soul, putrefaction, or to rephrase it in Biblical language the "return" of the flesh to "dust", is the fulfilment of the ordinance of the Almighty. Such putrefaction is the penalty for original sin<sup>40</sup>, the restoration of the flesh to its primitive condition, that is, the dust of the earth.<sup>41</sup>

Grounded in the early chapters of Genesis, Tertullian found the principal authority for the workings of the grave in the teaching of the Old Dispensation. The teachings of the New Dispensation, however, provided authority too. The Pauline

image of the "seed" sown in the ground was exploited thoroughly by Resurr. 52:16, 69-52:18, 74 and Marc. V.10:3. 6-10:6, 11.

Of course, as Tertullian would have recognised, in an age when only the poor were laid directly into the ground,<sup>42</sup> there frequently must have been discrepancies between the Biblical ideal and the Carthaginian reality. Nonetheless, in his eyes, the image of the "seed" provided a theological justification for the cycle of disintegration and reintegration - not a hard and fast scientific explanation which had to apply in all cases. Even where it has not the opportunity to function as such, the assertion that the "soil" is a key agent in decomposition vividly expresses the totality of death. By recalling the corrosive action of the soil, it highlights the fact that the flesh is annihilated in the grave.

#### 1.2.2 The scientific theory of death as decomposition

When dabbling with scientific theories, Tertullian was far more hesitant and uncertain. Resurr. 52:16, 69-52:18, 74 and Marc. V. 10:3, 6-10:6, 11 point to the fact that he found the metaphor of the "seed" disintegrating in the soil to be an effective one. Now, like all well-chosen metaphors, its effectiveness must have lain in its appeal to common experience. Therefore, Tertullian and his contemporaries must have recognised that the soil is one of the agents which hasten the decomposition of corpses.

That he did so recognise the soil as a destructive agent comes across clearly in Resurr. 12:4, 14-12:5, 22, where he included the destruction of seeds (as a prelude to the growth of plants) amongst the cycles of death and resurrection which characterise nature. In Tertullian's own words:

"Quippe etiam terrae de caelo disciplina est: arbores uestire post spolia, flores denuo colorare, herbas rursus inponere, exhibere eadem quae absumpta sunt semina nec prius exhibere quam absumpta. Mira ratio: de fraudatrice seruatrix; ut reddat, intercipit; ut custodiat, perdit; interficit, ut uiuificet; ut integret, uitiat; ut etiam ampliet, prius decoquit, siquidem et uberiores et cultiores restituit quam exterminauit, reuera fenore interitu et iniuria usura et lucro damno."

The fact that Tertullian expounded this theory of the destruction of the seed in the soil outwith his expositions of I Cor. 15:42-44 renders it more likely that he regarded it as a genuine "scientific" theory and therefore makes it more probable that the soil had a part to play in his understanding of decomposition.

Surprisingly, however, Tertullian made no overt reference to the role played by the worm in the decay wrought by the grave. This silence is all the more notable because the Bible itself is not silent on that score. Both Isa. 14:11 and Isa. 66:24 equate the "worm" with death and decay. His silence could not have been caused by ignorance of these texts, since he quoted Isa. 66:24 in full in Resurr. 31:9, 29-33. Perhaps, he included the work of the worm under the heading of the action of the soil.

Instead, he alluded to a concept which is far less familiar to the modern mind. This was the concept that there is within the body "material" which is peculiarly "corruptible" or "perishable". When seeking to find an acceptable reason why a body occasionally fails to decompose, Tertullian declared in Anim. 51:3, 10-14 that such an anomaly must have been caused by the absence of "corruptible" material within the flesh of that individual, not by the presence of a residue of his soul. In Tertullian's own words, "quid, si et genus mortis ante iam corruptelae materias erogarat?" Now, although, Tertullian's principal concern when referring to "corruptible" material was to remind his readers that man is mortal,<sup>43</sup> there seems to have been more to his reference on this occasion. Anim. 51:3, 13-14 appears to locate a "corrupting" agent within the flesh itself.

So, is it possible to determine what Tertullian had in mind when he alluded to such a "corrupting" agent? The process of mummification, as practised in neighbouring Egypt, had entailed the removal of the viscera from the corpse in an attempt to retard the advance of putrefaction.<sup>44</sup> There is no evidence that Anim. 51:3, 13-14 was intended to refer to the removal of any organs. Whilst surgery was practised by the physicians of the Greco-Roman world, it tended to take the form of amputations and other "superficial" surgery rather than major, internal surgery.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the situation envisaged by Tertullian appears to have been one which was the natural by-product of disease, not one which was the unnatural product of the surgeon's skill. The verb used by Tertullian was "erogare".

With its primary sense of "expending" money<sup>46</sup>, this verb would seem to imply that the "destruction" of the "corrupting" material which Tertullian had in mind was a "destruction" which had taken the form of an "expulsion" from the body. In contrast to the state of the Egyptian mummy, the situation faced by Tertullian was one which had been created by disease, not by man. Disease can only prevent the effective working of an organ; it cannot remove it from the body.

Nevertheless, there is one aspect of the embalmer's craft which may provide a clue to Tertullian's reasoning. The ancient Egyptians had sought to achieve the preservation of the corpse by drying it until it was reduced to a shrivelled husk. They had achieved this dehydration by applying natron to the corpse.<sup>47</sup> Natron is a product which is saline in character. Could it be that Tertullian (like the ancient Egyptians) associated dehydration with preservation and moisture with decomposition? Certainly, in Anim. 51:3, 11-12, he acknowledged that the presence of "salt" within the soil might retard the decay of a corpse. (Salt, which, like natron, is deliquescent would have absorbed some of the body's moisture). This does not necessarily mean that Tertullian was aware of the details of the mummification process. What it does mean is that he was acquainted with the tradition within the ancient world which associated moisture with decomposition.

If Tertullian did indeed associate moisture with decomposition, the body fluids hold the key to the identity of the "corruptible" material alluded to in Anim. 51:3, 13-14. Accepting this premise, it is surely significant that, in Resurr. 51:8, 43-44, when expounding I Cor. 15:53, he assigned the role of the "corruptible" element to the "blood". "Quid mortale, nisi caro? Quid corruptium, nisi sanguis?"

That Tertullian did indeed identify "blood" with moisture and decay can be illustrated by Ieiun. 12:2, 23-27. In that excerpt, he emphasised the "succulence" of human blood and equated the lack of such succulence in the proponent of xerophagy with his pre-emption in this life of the work of the grave. (The word which he applied to blood was "sucus", a word meaning "juice", "sap" or "moisture"). If the man whose flesh has dehydrated during his lifetime has forestalled the work of the grave, this is prima-facie evidence for claiming that moisture begets decay. Only by already having destroyed the moisture upon which decay feeds can the dehydrated body of the proponent of xerophagy be said to have forestalled the work of the grave. Hence, both Resurr. 51:8, 41-44 and Ieiun. 12:2, 23-27 point to the fact that the body's own moisture accelerates its tendency to rot.

The hypothesis that "blood" was the "corruptible" element to which Tertullian alluded in Anim. 51:3, 13-14 faces several objections, objections which require to be countered. Firstly, when expounding the "corruptible" element mentioned

in I Cor. 15:53 in terms of "blood", Tertullian's overwhelming concern was to uphold the resurrection of the very flesh in which men lived their earthly existence.<sup>48</sup> The identification of the "mortal" and the "corruptible" in that text with the two main elements of the human body was integral to his purpose; only thus could "flesh" and "blood" be seen to be the true heirs of "incorruption" and "immortality". Consequently, in Resurr. 51:8, 41-44, his words were those of the ideologically motivated theologian - they were not those of an impartial scientist.

In reply to this very real objection, I would say that ideological motivation and "objective" theory are not necessarily incompatible. Tertullian could have seized upon a "scientific" belief to reinforce his theological purpose.

Secondly, the passages where he identified the "corruptible" element with "blood" can be matched by those in which he designated the "flesh" as the "corruptible" element. A fine example of such an application of "caro" can be found in Resurr. 50:6, 24-26:

"Iam uero, cum deuorari habeat corruptiuum istud  
ab incorruptibilitate, id est caro, et mortale  
istud ab immortalitate, id est sanguis".

From the point of view of the champion of the resurrection, the central issue was that both "flesh" and "blood" are subject to decay and decomposition. This was the message whichever way I Cor. 15:53 is expounded. In the light of this, how much weight can be placed upon a passage like Resurr. 51:8, 41-44?



After due consideration of this, I would observe that if one looked more closely, the distinction between "caro" and "sanguis" is more apparent than real. For all the rhetorical distinction between the two in Resurr. 50:6, 24-26 and 51:8, 41-44, the "flesh" has no existence which is independent of "blood". "Flesh" always includes "blood". It is suffused by it.

The physicians of Tertullian's own era themselves recognised this intimacy. Galen regarded the veins as the means whereby the flesh was nourished and "irrigated". To quote Galen:

"In the interspace between the fibres a fluid is distributed which is most adapted to the nutrition of those parts which the fibres attract from the veins ... The body is nourished by attracting the blood through the walls of the vessel."<sup>49</sup>

The position of the "Methodist" physicians was not so very different. Following the premise of Atomism, the "Methodists" envisaged the "flesh" as a congregation of "atoms" between which the body fluids flowed.<sup>50</sup> They believed that illness was caused by the excessive "constriction" or "relaxation" of these "pores".<sup>51</sup> In short, contemporary medicine assumed the intimate association of the flesh with "blood".

That Tertullian did associate "caro" and "sanguis" intimately can be seen by Carn. 5:5, 29-33. The flesh of Christ was a mesh of blood, tissue, nerves and veins:



"Sed haec quomodo uera in illo erunt, si ipse non fuit uerus, si non uere habuit in se quod figeretur, quod moreretur, quod sepeliretur et resuscitaretur, carnem scilicet hanc sanguine suffusam, ossibus substructam, neruis intextam, uenis implexam?"

The key word was the verb "suffundere". Meaning "to pour into or among", "to overspread" or "to suffuse", attention is focussed upon the fact that Christ's flesh was saturated with "blood". It is not difficult to understand how Tertullian could use "caro" and "sanguis" interchangeably when expounding I Cor. 15:53. If flesh is saturated with blood, any reference to the "flesh" includes the "blood".

Just as Tertullian's distinction between "flesh" and "blood" in his exposition of I Cor. 15:53 was more apparent than real, so too his distinction therein between the "mortal" and the "corruptible". To be "mortal" is to be subject to death. However, as Resurr. 51:4, 20-24 saw clearly, being subject to death is none other than being liable to decay and decomposition. Such a liability means being "corruptible" or "perishable". Hence, whether "flesh" and "blood" are branded "mortal" or "corruptible", they are both biodegradable.

To understand why Tertullian could interpret blood as the "corruptible" element, it is helpful to recall the characteristics of that substance as they are to be found in ancient medicine. Firm in the belief that the universe had been composed of the four elements of earth, air, fire and water, the classical mind considered that all things within that universe were characterised by one or more of four qualities - dryness, moisture, heat and cold.<sup>52</sup> Within this

thought pattern, the "Dogmatic" school of medicine believed that each of the four humours was distinguished by a combination of these qualities.<sup>53</sup> They characterised blood as "moist" and "hot".

As has previously been demonstrated, there was a tradition within the ancient world which coupled "moisture" and decay. Moreover, in the warm climate of the Mediterranean, it would have been an easily observable fact that "heat" hastens putrefaction. Therefore, the very characteristics of blood were those which logically might render it liable to hasten the decomposition of a corpse. Since Anim. 53:2, 14-15 points to Tertullian having had some knowledge of the theory of the four humours, it is surely significant that that theory characterised blood as "moist" and "hot".

The fact that Tertullian's medical mentor, Soranus of Ephesus, was a "Methodist" does not detract from this. For the author of Anim. 32:2, 11-32:3, 29,<sup>54</sup> the thought world of the four elements and the four qualities was not an alien one.

The hypothesis that the "corruptible" element should be interpreted as "blood" is reinforced, in Anim. 51:3, 13-14, by the immediate context of its allusion to "corruptible" material. The sentence which immediately preceded Anim. 51:3, 13-14 is particularly pertinent. There, Tertullian claimed that sometimes the substance of the flesh itself is peculiarly "dry" - "quid, si et ipsius corporis substantia exsuccior?" The decisive word used by Tertullian in Anim.

51:3, 12 was "exsuccus", meaning to be "without juice" or "sapless". The juxtaposition of Anim. 51:3, 12 and Ieiun. 12:2, 25 confirms that the juiciness of the flesh is epitomised chiefly by "blood".

Why may a body have been peculiarly "dry"? Tertullian was probably referring to the "Methodist's" theory of disease. (The theory whereby all illness was defined in terms of a state of "flux" or a state of "obstruction").<sup>55</sup> A state of "obstruction" would have tended to produce a corpse which was excessively moist, whereas a state of "flux" would have tended to render the corpse unduly dry.

If Tertullian was familiar with the medical theory by which diseases were categorised according to the condition of moisture or dryness which resulted, he could well have perceived the "destruction" of the "corruptible" material as the "expulsion" of a large quantity of the body fluids. This would have been in keeping with the connotations of the verb used in Anim. 51:3, 13-14, that is, "erogare". Moreover, whilst his emphasis on "blood" points to such an expulsion having primarily taken the form of haemorrhages, wounds or blood-letting, because "blood" was simply a symbol of moisture, the said expulsion could also have been achieved through nausea and diarrhoea.

Moisture, corruptibility and mortality, these qualities were intimately related with each other, in the mind of Tertullian.

If the Carthaginian's theological interpretation of death as the onset of decomposition was clear and unequivocal, the same cannot be said of his scientific interpretation. There can be no indisputable exposition of Tertullian's excursions into science - only highly probable hypotheses. The reason for his ambiguity was simple. His real interest lay with the theology; the science, by and large, was superfluous to his concerns.

What were the essential characteristics of death as the onset of decomposition? What effect did they have upon Tertullian's perception of death?

First and foremost, death signifies annihilation. By stressing that the putrefaction of the flesh is an inescapable consequence of death, Tertullian drove home in the starkest possible terms the literal meaning of death. The flesh, the visible symbol of each man's individuality will rot and dissolve into the ground. Having emerged from "dust", man will return thence. To quote Resurr. 18:5, 23-18:6, 26:

"Qui ignorat carnem cadere per mortem, potest eam nec stantem nosse per uitam. Sententiam dei natura pronuntiat: 'terra es et in terram ibis,' et qui non audit, uidet: nulla mors non ruina membrorum est."

Discussing the impact of putrefaction, Vicastillo recognises that the flesh will be "obliterated". "La 'dissolutio in terram' consuma la caída y el enterramiento".<sup>56</sup> Tertullian's application of Gen. 3:19 was not an unthinking

reproduction of Biblical teaching but rather a penetrating statement of reality.<sup>57</sup>

Although Tertullian was always careful to exclude the soul from the annihilation which beset man's corporeal constituents - as is demonstrated by Test. 4:5, 23-4:9, 48 - he was adamant that death entailed the destruction of the physical manifestation of that individual, that is, his flesh. Since, as Anim. 27:2, 5-27:4, 21 and Resurr. 5:8, 38-5:9, 43 illustrate, man as he knows himself is nothing less than the conjunction of body and soul, the prospect of the destruction of that body cannot fail to strike the soul as catastrophic. The soul itself may not die but existence (as it has previously known it) is altered radically.

Secondly, putrefaction is nauseating; it evokes revulsion in all those who behold it. By describing in heavily realistic terms the disintegration and dissolution of man's flesh by death, Tertullian must have inspired his readers with horror. That horror must have been a humbling experience. The recognition that the dissolution of their own flesh might well take place in the stomach of a wild animal or the crop of a bird of prey must have accentuated men's sense of the sheer degradation and loathsomeness of death. Resurr. 32:1, 1-32:2, 11 sternly pressed home this recognition.

Furthermore, when it is recognised that even the quietest and most secluded of tombs is identical in its *modus operandi* to the digestive powers of Jonah's notorious whale,

that degradation and loathsomeness becomes part of the destiny of every man. It can no longer be dismissed as the fate of the unfortunate few. Resurr. 32:3, 14-16 declares:

"Et utique triduum concoquendae carni uiscera ceti suffecissent quam capulum, quam sepulchrum, quam senium requietae atque conditae alicuius sepulturae".

One of the most effective similes for death is that of an animal "devouring" its prey. To quote Vicastillo on the relationship between "dissolutio" and "deuoratio", "la disolución de la carne corresponde a la acción devoradora que sobre elle ejercen otros elementos: en 'dissolutio in terram' hay una verdadera 'deuoratio'".<sup>58</sup> According to Resurr. 54:5, 20-21, it is just because death is the ultimate "devourer" that it will be "devoured" itself.<sup>59</sup> The idea of death as "deuoratio" is a distasteful one. It reduces human death and therefore man himself to the same level as the prey of carnivorous animals. It is a painful reminder of the stench and squalor which accompany putrefaction.

Finally, death is not a phenomenon which is conditional or partial in its effect; it is absolute and total. By emphasising that death means physical annihilation and all the loathsome consequences which attended putrefaction, Tertullian augmented his argument that death is the antithesis of "life". To recall his words in Idol. 13:3, 17-21, there can be no "communion" between the two.<sup>60</sup> "Being" can have nothing in common with "non-being". The stench of death cannot be associated with the savour of

life. For the author of Anim. 51:8, 49, a man could not be half dead - "mors, si non semel tota est, non est".

Before concluding this chapter, it is necessary to examine the distribution of Tertullian's references to physical death. For all that he applied the word "death" and its derivatives throughout his corpus - from his apologetic works through to his moralistic and his theological ones - his discussions about the meaning of physical death are confined primarily to two books. They are Anim. and Resurr. Both these works can be dated to the middle period of Tertullian's career, probably to around 206 to 210. Despite the fact that he had been exhorting the confessors to die for the Faith as early as 197, at least ten years of his career elapsed before Tertullian felt the need to ponder in detail the meaning of physical death.

It is surely significant that these discussions of the meaning of physical death are to be found in his theological works. Tertullian's concept of physical death was a profoundly theological one. The immortality of the soul, the meaning of "resurrection" and the consequences of the Fall<sup>61</sup> - these ideas had a profound impact upon that concept. Indeed, I would go so far as to claim that Tertullian's concept of physical death was orientated towards his eschatological expectations.

Anim. and Resurr. are, however, more than simply theological works; they were also productions designed to counter Gnosticism. They were designed to counter the Gnostic claim



that true "death" is the soul's "ignorance" of God and that true "resurrection" is the dispersal of that ignorance by "gnosis". (Tertullian's concern, in Anim. 53:2, 6-53:3, 28, to protect the soul from any imputation of mortality must be read in the light of Resurr. 19:1, 1-19:6, 30). It was the intellectual threat posed to the Church by Gnosticism which caused Tertullian to reflect more deeply upon the nature of physical death.<sup>62</sup>

To sum up, in the writings of Tertullian, death as a natural phenomenon is not without its contradictions. A phenomenon which can be regarded as a place of "sanctuary" - in the words of Resurr. 28:2, 7-8 "dehinc carnem de sinu mortis retractura" - death is depicted frequently in the guise of a "predator".<sup>63</sup> The warmth and security of the "bosom" has given way to the anxiety and vulnerability of the hunted. A gentle "sleep" which overcomes the soul<sup>64</sup> - to quote Pat. 9:1, 4-5 "ne contristemini dormitione cuiusquam sicut nationes quae spe carent" - death is portrayed as the "annihilation" of those physical components which gave visible expression to the life of the individual. If, for the author of Pat. 9:3, 9-9:4, 17, death is merely a temporary "departure", it is also a nauseating departure bringing in its wake decomposition and decay. Death as a natural phenomenon is riddled with unresolved ambiguities. Indeed, they are ambiguities which are often incapable of resolution. An integral part of man's equivocalness in the face of this one inescapable certainty - these ambiguities left their mark upon Tertullian's theological evaluation of death.



## References : Chapter 1

1. A.R. Burn, "Hic Breve Vivitur : a Study in the Expectancy of Life in the Roman Empire", P.P., 4, 1953, p. 2-31.
2. Opinions vary as to the number of martyrs in the early Church - W.H.C. Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church, Michigan, 1965, p.x.
3. A.A.T. Ehrhardt, "Origen : Theologian in the Cataclysm of the Ancient World", Oikoumene : Studi Paliocristiani Pubblicati in Onore del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II, Catania, 1964, pp. 273-321.
4. C. Claeson, Index Tertullianus, Paris, 1975, pp.970-971, 972-974, 968-969, 1155-1156 and 1073.
5. Examples of metaphorical usage include Apol. 48:7, 52, Pud. 17:6, 20, Resurr. 12:2, 7 and 47:2, 9. Examples of eschatological usage include Fug. 7:2, 34, Pud. 14:16, 61, 17:17, 74 and 19:8, 39.
6. Anim. 27:5, 27-27:9, 57.  
See J.H. Waszink, Tertullianus : De Anima, Amsterdam, 1947, pp.342-348.
7. "Praestringere tamen non pigebit delictorum quaedam esse carnalia, id est corporalia, quaedam uero spiritalia - nam cum ex hac duplicis substantiae congregatione confectus homo sit, non aliunde deliquit quam unde constat -; sed non eo inter se differunt, quod corpus et spiritus duo sunt, atquin eo magis paria sunt, quia duo unum efficiunt, ne quis pro diuersitate materialium peccata earum discernat ut alterum altero leuius aut grauius existimet. Siquidem et caro et spiritus dei res, alia manu eius expressa, alia adflatu eius consummata; cum ergo ex pari ad dominum pertineant, quodcumque eorum deliquerit ex pari dominum offendit. An tu discernas actus carnis et spiritus, quorum et in uita et in morte et in resurrectione tantum communionis atque consortii est, ut pariter tunc aut in uitam aut in iudicium suscitentur, quia scilicet pariter aut deliquerint aut innocenter egerint?" (Paen. 3:3, 9-3:6,24).
8. R.E. Siegel, Galen's System of Physiology and Medicine, New York, 1968, pp.88-91, 93 and 159, C. Singer, Anatomy and Physiology from the Greeks to Harvey, New York, 1957, pp.31-33, and Waszink, Anim., p.541.
9. "He (Galen) explained epilepsy and apoplexy by assuming an impaired flow of the cerebral pneuma due to accumulation of heavy phlegm. Galen thought that an inspissated humour obstructs the flow of pneuma which he regarded as the carrier of mental activities and all other functions of the brain. Only when the flow of pneuma through these channels remains open, the nutrition and heat of the brain appeared guaranteed." (Siegel, Galen, p.306).  
See also Siegel, Galen, pp.304-307 and 332-352.
10. "Diseases were explained, according to the humoral doctrine, mainly by modification of the circulating humours. Humours could become too heavy, too thin, acrid or sharp, acid or watery, all these alterations depending on external influences or abnormal behaviour of the body's heat production. But the abnormal

- humours can, in turn, alter the composition and appearance of the various organs, which leads to the often remarkable clinical findings, which were already noticed by the physicians of this period." (Siegel, Galen, p.212.)
- See also Galen, pp. 200, 205, 212 and 232-233 and L. Edelstein, Ancient Medicine, Baltimore, 1967, pp.72 and 266.
11. Waszink displays only limited interest - see Anim, p.541.
  12. By contrast, Waszink does not believe that "instrumentis ... spatiis" bears a direct corrolation to the "materia", "regionis" and "uiaae" of Anim. 53:2, 12-16 - see Anim. pp.541, 542.
  13. Siegel, Galen, pp.148-149, 216-224, 232-233 and 236-241, Edelstein, Ancient Medicine, pp.72, 266-268 and 303-306 and A.J. Brock, Greek Medicine, London, 1929, pp. 9 and 187-188.
  14. Waszink, Anim. pp.318-320, 345-346 and 428.
  15. Galen in his On Medical Sects summarised the "Methodist's" theory of disease as follows. "If the natural evacuations of the body are checked, they call this an obstructed condition, and if they are escaping somewhat too freely, they call this fluent; when they are both checked and fluent, they say that a complex exists" - see Brock Greek Medicine, p.140.  
See also Edelstein, Ancient Medicine, pp.179-181, Brock, Greek Medicine, pp.18-19 and 140-151 and Waszink, Anim. pp.22-26.
  16. Anim. 53:3, 16-28.
  17. "Herophilus ille medicus aut lanius, qui sexcentos exsecuit, ut naturam scrutaretur, qui hominem odiit, ut nosset, nescio an omnia interna eius liquido explorarit, ipsa morte mutante quae uixerant, et morte non simplici, sed ipsa inter artificia exsectionis errante." (Anim. 10:4, 17-22).
  18. Edelstein, Ancient Medicine, pp.297-301, Singer, Anatomy and Physiology, pp. 28-29 and 34-35, and J. Scarborough, Roman Medicine, London, 1967, pp.34-35.
  19. Resurr. 52:17, 67.
  20. Anim. 52:1, 1-2.
  21. The majority of the Old and the New Testament had been translated into Latin by the late second century - J. Daniélou, The Origins of Latin Christianity, London, 1977, pp.508. It is evident from Apol. 39:3, 9-14, that the Scriptures were read aloud at Church services. However, the extent to which the faithful recalled specific passages is impossible to determine.
  22. Ieiun. 4:1, 3-4 and Anim. 17:11, 7073.
  23. R. Braun, Deus Christianorum : Recherches sur le Vocabulaire Doctrinal de Tertullien, Paris, 1977, p.139.
  24. Anim. 14:1, 1-5 and 22:2, 8-14.
  25. Fredouille, Tertullien, p. 483.
  26. Anim. 14:1, 1-5 and 22:2, 8-14.  
See Waszink, Anim. pp.125-126 and 128-129, Fredouille, Tertullien, p. 350 and Daniéllou, Origins, pp.215-218.
  27. Anim. 58:2, 4-58:4, 24.
  28. Although Galen merely emphasised the role of the liver in nutrition and did not subdivide the "pneuma zotikon", many ancient physicians did situate the

- "pneuma physikon" in the liver - see Seigel, Galen. pp.184-188 and 243-247. The fact that Tertullian was adamant that the soul is "simple", in Anim. 10:1, 1-10:2, 9, does not mean that he could not have used and adapted this medical theory if it suited his purpose.
29. Anim. 53:6, 50-55.  
See Waszink, Anim. pp.545-546.
  30. Anim. 53:4, 39-41.  
See Waszink, Anim. p.544.
  31. Paen. 3:4, 13-3:6, 24, Resurr. 14:10, 34-141:11, 45 and 15:1, 1-15:8, 35.  
This partnership between the soul and the flesh is at variance with Anim. 40:2, 4-40:4, 30, where the subordination of the flesh to the soul was emphasised - see Waszink, Anim. pp.449-452 and C. Munier Tertullien : La Pénitence, Paris, 1984, pp.34-38
  32. S. Vicastillo, Tertulliano y la Muerte del Hombre, Madrid, 1980, p.191.
  33. Anim. 52:2, 10-15, Scorp. 5:10, 14-5:12, 21 and Marc. II. 4:5, 20-4:6, 9.
  34. This would seem to be the logical corollary of Anim. 52:2, 10-15, Scorp. 5:11, 15-19, Marc. II. 4:5, 20-4, 6, 3 and II. 6:5, 2-6:7, 23.
  35. Examples of the Goodness of God include Marc. I. 22:3-22:4, 9, II.3:2, 18-20 and II.4:4, 7-18.  
Examples of the Goodness of His creation include Marc. I.13:1, 16-14:5, 8, II.6:4, 22-6:8, 9 and Spect. 2:4, 19-22.  
See Braun, Deus Christianorum, pp.123-126 and J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, London, 1958, p.176.
  36. Resurr. 45:6, 24-45:14, 43, 47:1, 1-47:8, 31, 49:9, 41-49, 56, Ieiun. 1:1, 3-1:3, 25 and Monog. 1:3, 17-24.
  37. Plato, Phaid. 67A-84B - see Anim. 17:12, 81-86.
  38. Anim. 53:3, 16-28.
  39. "Sicut et granum corpus seritur corpus resurgit. Seminationem denique uocauit dissolutionem corporis in terram, quia seritur in corruptela, in dedecoratione, in infirmitate, resurgit autem in incorruptelam, in honestatem, in uirtutem. Cuius ille ordo in dissolutione, eius et hic in resurrectione, corporis scilicet. Sicut et granum. Ceterum si auferas corpus resurrectioni quod dedisti dissolutioni, ubi consistet diuersitas exitus?" (Marc. V. 10:5, 19-25).
  40. Resurr. 18:6, 25-26 and 52:17, 66-68.
  41. Resurr. 5:18, 38-43, 6:1, 1-6:5, 25, 7:1, 1-7:5, 22 and Marc. II. 4:14, 9-13.
  42. J.C.M. Toynbee, Death and Burial in the Roman World, London, 1971, pp.101-103.
  43. Resurr. 50:6, 24-26, 51:4, 20-24 and 51:8, 37-51:10, 53.
  44. A.J. Spencer, Death in Ancient Egypt, Harmondsworth, 1982, pp.35-37.
  45. Although Galen gave instructions for operating upon cancer, such major surgery would have been relatively rare.  
See Edelstein, Ancient Medicine, p.81 and 248, Scarborough, Roman Medicine, p.69 and Siegel, Galen, pp.285-287.
  46. This interpretation of "erogare" is not in line with that of Waszink Anim. p.377.
  47. Spencer, Death in Ancient Egypt, pp.112-113.



48. Resurr. 51:8, 37-51:10, 53 and 50:5, 19-50:6, 28.
49. Siegel, Galen. p.212.
50. Siegel, Galen. p.14, Brock, Greek Medicine, pp.17-19 and 151-153, Scarborough, Roman Medicine, pp.39-40 and Waszink, Anim. pp.23-24.
51. Galen in his On Medical Sects summarised the "Methodist's" understanding of the composition of the flesh and its effect on disease as follows. "They postulate ducts or 'pores', some of which become dilated, other closed, and in this way they suppose that two kinds of disease are brought about" - see Brock, Greek medicine, p.150.  
See also Siegel, Galen, pp.166-167, Brock, Greek Medicine, pp.18-19 and 147-151 and Waszink, Anim. pp.23-24.
52. Siegel, Galen, pp.146-147, Singer, Anatomy and Physiology, p.27 and Brock, Greek Medicine, p.10.
53. "Each humour was supposed to be characterised by the prevalence of one particular quality in combination with lesser amounts of other qualities, the characteristics of each humour depending on this predominant quality. The four essential humours are: yellow bile, consisting largely of heat and dryness (similar to fire); black bile ('melon chole' in Greek, 'atra bilis' in Latin) which like earth is dry and cold (heating black bile will produce a residue of 'earth'); mucus, 'pituita' ('phlegm' in Greek), consisting mainly of the cold and moist (like water); and lastly blood, containing all other humours in varying qualities, but representing a greater share of moisture and heat like air." (Siegel, Galen, p.148).
54. "Dicimus animam humanam nullo modo in bestias posse transferri, etiamsi secundum philosophos ex elementiciis substantiis censetur. Siue enim ignis anima, siue aqua, siue sanguis, siue spiritus, siue aer, siue lumen, recogitare debemus contraria quaeque singulis speciebus animalia; igni quidem ea quae rigent, colubros stelliones salamandras, etiam quaecumque de aemulo producentur elemento, de aqua scilicet; perinde contraria aquae illa quae arida et exsuccida: denique siccitatibus gaudent lucustae papiliunculi chamaeleontes; item contraria sanguini quae carent purpura eius, cochleas uermiculos et maiorem piscium censuum; spiritui uero contraria quae spirare non uidentur, carentia pulmonibus et arteriis, culices formicas tineas et hoc genus minutalia; item aeri contraria quae semper subterraneum et subaquaneum uiuentia carent haustu eius (res magis quam nomina noueris); item contraria lumini quae caeca in totum uel solis tenebris habent oculos, talpas uesperugines noctuas. Haec ut ex apparentibus et manifestis substantiis doceam."
55. See note 15.
56. Vicastillo, La Muerte, p.264.
57. *ibid*, p.260
58. *ibid*, p.267.
59. *ibid*, p.273.
60. See Waszink and Van Winden, Idol. p.226.  
This dichotomy between the things of "light" and the things of "darkness" was a feature of Tertullian's style - see Fredouille, Tertullien, pp.320-323.

61. Anim. 14:1, 1-5, Resurr. 18:4, 17-18:12, 59 and Anim. 52:2, 10-15, respectively.
62. W. Foerster, Gnosis, Vol. 2, Oxford, 1972, pp.58-66, 69-70 and 71-75 and Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, pp.22-28.
63. Resurr. 51:4, 20-51:5, 37, 54:4, 18-54:5, 25 and Marc. IV. 20:5, 21.
64. Saxer, Morts, Martyrs, Reliques, pp.62-65, J.C. Fredouille, Tertullien : De la Patience, Paris, 1984, p.197 and Waszink, Anim. p.531.

## CHAPTER 2

### DEATH AS THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

## 2. DEATH AS THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

As depicted by the Gospels, the way of the Lord is the way of self-abnegation, humiliation, suffering and death. Consequently, countless generations of the faithful have been encouraged to locate the essence of true Christian discipleship in the faithful imitation of the qualities evidenced by their Master, Christ Jesus. Their reasoning has run as follows. If God Himself in the person of His Son drained Himself for the sake of man, ought not man drain himself of all self-love and self-interest for the sake of God?

Important though the "imitatio Christi" theme would prove for later generations of the faithful, there is evidence to suggest that in the thought of Tertullian, it played only a subordinate role. In marked contrast to the martyrologist of Lyons and Vienne<sup>1</sup> (who regarded the imitation of the Passion as one of the principal factors inspiring the martyrs) Tertullian did not place the imitation of the Passion centre stage in his expositions of martyrdom. The purpose of this chapter is to determine the importance which he did accord to the "imitatio Christi" motif in his theology of death and the fundamental character of that motif.

By answering two preliminary questions, I hope to further this exploration of Tertullian's interaction with the "imitatio Christi" motif. Firstly, what are the hallmarks of a fully developed "imitatio Christi" motif? Secondly,

was the "imitatio Christi" motif an indigenous element of Tertullian's theology?

## 2.1 The hallmarks of "imitatio Christi"

Throughout the history of the Church, one of the principal hallmarks of the "imitatio Christi" motif has been a preoccupation with the torments inflicted upon Christ by His persecutors and a preoccupation with the agonies which He endured upon the cross. This can be demonstrated by the fact that as early as 177, according to Mart. Loug. 1:41, 14-20, Blandina's fellow martyrs when they beheld her strapped to a stake in the amphitheatre at Lyons, recalled the figure of their Lord as He hung on the cross at Calvary:

"ἡ δὲ Βλανδῖνα ἐπὶ ξύλου κρεμασθεῖσα προύκειτο βορὰ τῶν εἰσβαλλομένων θηρίων, ἥ καὶ διὰ τοῦ βλέπεσθαι σταυροῦ σχήματι κρεμαμένη, διὰ τῆς εὐτόνου προσευχῆς πολλὴν προθυμίαν τοῖς ἀγωνιζομένοις ἐνεποίει, βλέπόντων αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ ἁγῶνι καὶ τοῖς ἔξωθεν ὀφθαλμοῖς διὰ τῆς ἀδελφῆς τὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐσταυρωμένον, ἵνα πείσῃ τοὺς πιστεύοντας εἰς αὐτὸν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ὑπὲρ τῆς Χριστοῦ δόξης παθὼν τὴν κοινωνίαν αὐτοῦ ἔχει μετὰ τοῦ ζῶντος θεοῦ."

This preoccupation with the sufferings of our Lord was to find one of its most memorable expressions many centuries later in the meditations of Julian of Norwich - meditations in which she visualised the pallid face and blood-stained forehead of her Saviour.<sup>2</sup>

Another hallmark of the "imitatio Christi" motif has been an urge to share in the sufferings endured by Christ. Thus, Pass. Perp. 18:9, 17-19 records that Perpetua and her



companions "rejoiced" that they were to obtain a "share" in the "Lord's sufferings" -

"ad hoc populus exasperatus flagellis eos uexari per ordinem uenatorum postulauit; et utique gratulati sunt quod aliquid et de dominicis passionibus essent consecuti."

Similarly, in Rhom. 6:3, 9-12, it is documented that Ignatius of Antioch longed to "imitate" his Master's Passion and in Mart. Pol. 14:2, 25-31, it is recorded that Polycarp rejoiced to be accounted "worthy" to partake in Christ's "cup" of suffering:

"Επιτρέψατέ μοι μιμητὴν εἶναι τοῦ πάθους τοῦ θεοῦ μου. Εἴ τις αὐτὸν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἔχει, νοησάτω ὃ θέλω, καὶ συμπαθεῖτω μοι, εἰδὼς τὰ συνέχοντά με."

(Rhom. 6:3, 9-12)

and

"εὐλογῶ σε ὅτι ἡξίωσάς με τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ ὥρας ταύτης τοῦ λαβεῖν μέρος ἐν ἄριθμῷ τῶν μαρτύρων, ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σου εἰς ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς αἰωνίου ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος ἐν ἀφαρσίᾳ πνεύματος ἁγίου, ἐν οἷς προσδεχθεῖν ἐνώπιόν σου σήμερον ἐν θυσίᾳ πίονι καὶ προσδεκτῇ, καθὼς προητοίμασας καὶ προεφανέρωσας καὶ ἐπλήρωσας ὁ ἀψευδὴς καὶ ἀληθινὸς θεός."

(Mart. Pol. 14:2, 25-31).

If the claim of Pass. Mont. et Luc. 4:5:17-4:6, 23 that it is "easy" to be "killed" for the sake of Christ, sounds a somewhat glib overstatement, it is rendered comprehensible by what follows - on the cross, Christ has already triumphed over death and crushed death's "sting":

"Nam et occidi seruis dei leue est, et ideo mors nihil est, cuius aculeos comminuens contentionemque deuincens dominus per trophaeum crucis triumphauit. Sed et nulla causa armorum est nisi quando miles armandus est, nec armatur nisi quando congressio est et in coronis nostris

ideo praemium est quia certamen ante praecessit,  
nec datur palma nisi congressione perfecta."

To phrase it in terms which would have been familiar to the author of Pass. Mont. et Luc. 4:4, 15-17, the martyr stands "under the shield of the Lord".

From the age of Constantine onwards, the circumstances of the Church ensured that opportunities for martyrdom became increasingly rare. As a result, the medieval "imitatio Christi" devotion would have to substitute the crucifixion of the passions<sup>3</sup> for the crucifixion of the flesh, the mortifications of ascetism for the sufferings of martyrdom. Nonetheless, the need to participate in the experience of Christ (whether literally or metaphorically) remained constant.

If the cross stood at the centre of the "imitatio Christi" motif, the call of Jesus of Nazareth and the need to respond faithfully to that call was also an important characteristic.<sup>4</sup> A fine example of the pivotal role which the North African Church of Tertullian's own century accorded to the call of Jesus is to be found in the Pass. Mar. et Iac. 7:3, 31-7:4, 3. The importance of that call, in the eyes of the Church, is the key which unlocks James' vision:

"Uidi', inquit (James) 'iuuenem inenarrabili et satis ampla magnitudine, cuius uestitus discincta erat in tantum candida luce ut oculi in eam constanter uidere non possent; cuius pedes terram non calcabant et uultus oris super nubes erant. Is cum transcurreret, unam tibi, Mariane, et unam mihi zonas purpureas in sinus nostros iaculatus est, et ait : "sequimini me cito".'"

For the author of Pass. Mar. et Iac., following Christ was very much a question of ethics; it was a question of conforming one's behaviour to example set by Christ. In order to illustrate that this emphasis on the call of Jesus was not confined to the early Church, it is only necessary to glance at the role which it played for Thomas à Kempis, according to whom "following" Christ entailed a commitment to "imitate His life and His ways" ("quatenus uitam eus et mores imitemur").<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the attempt to imitate Christ involved the Christian in an effort to set aside his natural impulses and weaknesses, for the sake of the Lord who had subordinated all His frailty to His love for mankind. Thus, such early Church figures as Ignatius and Origen declared:

"Ο ἐμὸς ἔρωρ ἐσταύρωται, καὶ οὐχ ἔστιν ἐν ἐμοὶ πῦρ φιλόυλον· ὕδωρ δὲ ζῶν καὶ λαλοῦν ἐν ἐμοὶ ἔσωθέν μοι λέγον· Δεῦρο πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. Οὐχ ἦδομαι τροφῇ φθορᾶς οὐδὲ ἡδοναῖς τοῦ βίου τούτου."

(Rhom. 7:2, 8-7:3, 10)

and:

"Ὅλη δὲ ψυχῇ νομίζω ἀγοπᾶσθαι τὸν θεὸν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποσπώντων καὶ δυστάντων αὐτὴν διὰ πολλὴν τὴν πρὸς τὸ κοινωνῆσαι τῷ θεῷ προθυμίαν οὐ μόνον ἀπὸ τοῦ γήινου σώματος ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ παντὸς σώματος· οἷς οὐδὲ μετὰ περισπασμοῦ καὶ περιελκυσμοῦ τινος γίνεται τὸ ἀποθέσθαι „τὸ“ „τῆς ταπεινώσεως“ „σῶμα“, ὅταν καιρὸς διδῷ διὰ τοῦ νομιζομένου θανάτου ἐκδύσασθαι τὸ σῶμα „τοῦ θανάτου“ καὶ ἐπακουσθῆναι ἀποστολικῶς εὐξάμενον καὶ εἰπόντα· „ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος· τίς με ῥύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου; τίς γὰρ τῶν „ἐν τῷ σκῆνει“ στεναζόντων διὰ τὸ βαρεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ φθορτοῦ σώματος οὐχὶ καὶ εὐχαριστήσῃ πρότερον εἰπών· „τίς με ῥύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου;“ βλέπων ὅτι διὰ τῆς ὁμιλίας ῥυσθεὶς ἀπὸ „τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου“ ἀγίως ἀναφθέγγεται τό· „ὅρις τῷ θεῷ διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν“."

(Mart. Prot. 3:276, 19-3:276, 2).

To phrase it in terms which would be familiar later to the medieval "imitatio" tradition, the Christian disciple had to subdue the "self".<sup>6</sup>

These are not the only characteristics which the "imitatio Christi" theme has assumed over the centuries. There is also, for example, its concern with the historical Jesus<sup>7</sup> and its concern with mystical experience. Moreover, at different periods in the Church's history, the balance of the various aspects has differed. Nevertheless, the aspects described above are key elements within many fully developed expressions of the "imitatio Christi" motif and therefore it would not be unreasonable to employ them as a model against which to compare and contrast the Tertullianic motif.

## 2.2 Tertullian and the "imitatio Christi" motif - was it an indigenous idea or a superficial appendage?

Any study of Tertullian's theology has to come to terms with one amazing feature of Mart. - that feature is its failure to employ the "imitatio Christi" motif. Absent from that work are both the language which denotes a disciple faithfully following his Teacher and the language which denotes a servant obeying his Master. Absent from that work is any allusion to the Passion of the martyrs' Master.

The Christ of Mart. 3:3, 23-3:4, 29 is an Athletic Overseer who, aware of an imminent athletic competition, sends His athletes to train at the gymnasium - there to learn to give their all in the impending tussle with their adversaries.

In other words, the attention was upon martyrdom as bitter conflict with and defeat of the powers of evil.

Thus, in Mart. 3:1, 11-3:4, 5, Tertullian's exhortation was directed towards convincing his readers that they were duty-bound to engage and defeat God's enemy. There was no talk of following the example set by a Lord or of adhering loyally to a Friend. This silence is all the more remarkable since Mart. 3:3, 23-26 was concerned to bolster up the courage of the prospective martyrs - by reminding them of the privileges and rewards of martyrdom.<sup>8</sup> Tertullian reminded them that the Holy Spirit Himself was their Trainer. Why did he not also remind them that Christ had walked the same path on His way to Calvary?

One possible explanation of this omission could be that when actually addressing men and women faced with impending martyrdom, he felt that it was unnecessary and indeed presumptuous to remind them of the very principle upon which they had grounded their Christian life. (It had been fidelity to the teachings of Christ which had led to their imprisonment in the first place).<sup>9</sup>

However, such an explanation is weak and flawed. Had Tertullian applied it with logical consistency, he should have also excluded from Mart. one of the most popular interpretations of martyrdom - martyrdom as combat with demons. Yet, such combat was accorded pride of place in Mart. Moreover, such an interpretation does nothing to explain why a similar scruple did not operate in his later

works. When urging the faithful to submit to martyrdom, in Scorp. 9:6, 21-27 and Fug. 7:2, 29-31, Tertullian did not display the reticence with regard to the duty of the Christian to follow in the footsteps of his martyred Master which he displayed in Mart.

So, how should this omission be explained? Although Apol. did depict the Christian as the "slave" of God and His Christ once (that is, in Apol. 23:15, 82), it would be going too far to claim that work displays a doctrine of "imitating" the Lord. It is only in Idol. 18:5, 10-18:6, 22 and Pat. 16:5, 15-18 that such a theory of Christian discipleship begins to emerge in Tertullian's works. These works can be dated within the period 200 to 206.

The conclusion surely has to be that the idea of following in the footsteps of his Lord and Master was not appropriated easily by Tertullian. It was not until the composition of Scorp. 9:6, 21-27, Fug. 12:7, 76-78 and Anim. 55:5, 36-40 that he integrated the idea of imitating Christ into his theology of martyrdom.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, it was only with those works that he assimilated the Biblical teaching on imitating the Passion into theology of death.<sup>11</sup> This was five to ten years after his authorship of Mart., which can be dated to 197.

At first sight, this line of reasoning seems to be at variance with H. Pétré's view that the finest examples of the "imitatio Christi" theme appear in Tertullian's Catholic works.<sup>12</sup> Such an impression is, however, erroneous. What I



am suggesting here is not that Tertullian did not incorporate the theme of following in the footsteps of the Incarnate, Crucified Christ into his theology during his Catholic period but that it took him some years to appropriate it. Consequently, the said theme was a feature of his mid to late Catholic period. (Where I would take issue with Pétré is his assumption that fine examples of the "imitatio Christi" theme are confined to Tertullian's Catholic period. Dating from his Montanist period, Cor. 14:3, 14-14:4, 32 is surely the equal of Pat. 3:1, 1-3:10, 37).

To return to Tertullian's failure to incorporate the "imitatio Christi" theme into Mart., it is not credible that, at the time of composing that work., he was unfamiliar with the idea that it is in following in the footsteps of the Master that true discipleship finds its expression. The schooling in the Faith which the catechumen underwent<sup>13</sup> would not have failed to demand such a commitment from its pupils. The summons to "follow" Jesus of Nazareth is integral to the message of the Gospels and although Hippolytus' statement in the Apost. Parad. 20:2 that listening to one of the Gospels was an integral part of the catechumenate is conclusive only for the practice in early third century Rome, it is highly probable that it was normal practice throughout the early Church. Yet, despite this, at the time of Mart., Tertullian had set that summons so much to one side that he felt able to omit it from his discussions.

It is in the character of Tertullian's conversion to Christianity that the explanation for this startling omission must be sought. That conversion had entailed not the total rejection of his pagan past but the gradual Christianisation of his classical inheritance. To quote J.C. Fredouille:

"La conversion de l'âme n'entraîne pas nécessairement une 'conversion' immédiate et radicale de la culture. Et de fait, la conversion du premier Père de l'Église d'Occident ne fut pas un reniement brutal de son passé. Il vaudrait mieux parler dans son cas d'une 'conversion continuée'."14

As Fredouille himself has noted, in Mart., the partial character of Tertullian's initial conversion is illustrated by the scarcity of the Scriptural citations and by his failure to exploit the message of the Passion.<sup>15</sup>

R. Braun and H. Pétré have noted the prominent position which Tertullian accorded to pagan examples of heroism and courage in Mart. 4:3, 20-4:9, 22, Apol. 50:4, 18-50:10, 46 and Nat. I. 18:1, 19-18:11, 19.<sup>16</sup> This too may be an indication of the gradual character of his conversion. I grant that pagan examples of chastity found a place in Tertullian's mature exhortations to monogamy, notably in Cast. 13:1, 5-13:3, 34 and Monog. 17:2, 5-17:4, 22.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, I believe that it is significant that by the time he composed Scorp. and Fug., he no longer found pagan examples of heroism and courage an appropriate mode of furthering his exhortations to martyrdom. (The distinction between the mature Tertullian's attitude to pagan "exempla" in his teaching on monogamy and his attitude to them in his teaching on martyrdom may owe something to the firm Biblical



foundations of martyrdom as following in the footsteps of Christ).

The appeal to a new convert of martyrdom as conflict with the powers of evil may explain the speed with which he assimilated that element of Christian teaching. To phrase it in terms which would have been familiar to the author of Bapt. 9:1, 308, until his baptism Tertullian had himself been in bondage to the Devil. He had been the dupe of those forgeries of the Truth which the Devil inflicts upon mankind - the forgeries which he later unmasked in Praes. 40:2, 2-40:10, 28 and Apol. 22:7, 25-30.<sup>18</sup> For the recent convert, evil must have seemed peculiarly immediate and pervasive and the need to challenge and destroy it exceptionally urgent.

His retention of pagan expectations of deity may explain Tertullian's delay in appropriating the "imitatio Christi" motif. His delay in incorporating the example of the Passion in his martyr theology suggests that his personal faith tended to be directed more towards God the Father and less towards God the Son. That this was the case, throughout his career, can be demonstrated by the fact that he designated the Christian the "slave of God" more frequently than he designed him the "slave of Christ".<sup>19</sup> Representative of this tendency are Pat. 4:1,5 ("seruos scilicet dei uiui") Uxor. I.4:2, 11-12 ("sed ultraque repudianda est a seruis dei") and Spect. 1:1, 4-5 ("dei serui ... qui cum maxime ad deum acceditis").

This tendency was probably a legacy from Tertullian's own religious experience as a pagan. Although heavily Romanised, the indigenous cults of second century North Africa (the cults of Saturn and Caelestis) had drawn much of their impetus from the worship of the Punic deities Ba'al-Hammon and Tanit.<sup>20</sup> Traditionally, Ba'al-Hammon/Saturn and Tanit/Caelestis had been all-demanding deities. Describing the sovereignty exercised over his devotees by Ba'al-Hammon/Saturn, M. Leglay declares:

"Il correspond en effet à une conception de la divinité propre aux peuples semitique, pour qui le dieu est un 'Seigneur' (Adon) et un 'Maître' (Ba'al), dont les fidèles sont les esclaves".<sup>21</sup>

Like the God of Israel, Ba'al-Hammon/Saturn was "lord".<sup>22</sup>

Of course, Tertullian's precise religious affiliation prior to his conversion is unknown. However, when the all-demanding character of the Christian God as portrayed by Scorp. 6:11, 19-23 and 7:7, 7-11<sup>23</sup> is set alongside the foregoing description of Ba'al-Hammon/Saturn, the idea that he had transferred something of the exacting nature of Ba'al-Hammon/Saturn to the Christian Father becomes an attractive one. It was not a question of Tertullian corrupting the Christian concept of Deity by introducing pagan constructs but rather of his own experience of an exacting deity reinforcing the Biblical teaching regarding the absolute authority of God.

If Tertullian had been accustomed to a deity who exercised supreme and unchallenged authority, it might well have encouraged him to direct his attention to the role of God

the Father in martyrdom - at the expense of that of God the Son. Such an interpretation accords well with Mart. 3:3, 23-3:4, 29, where a prominent position is accorded to the "agonothetes". That "agonothetes" was none other than the Living God. (The spirit of this passage stands in marked contrast to that of the contemporary Pass. Perp. 10:8, 7-10:9, 13 where the stage of the arena was dominated by one figure, the figure of the "lanista" - Christ").<sup>24</sup>

This is not to deny that, in the years which followed his composition of Mart., Tertullian's personal faith became more Christocentric. Passages such as Carn. 5:4, 26-5:5, 33 - with its glorification of the suffering, death and burial of our Lord - are ample proof of this. However, it does mean that it took some years for that aspect of his faith to deepen. Granted that in the words of Apol. 21:28, 140-143, the newly converted Tertullian "worshipped" God "through Christ", the meaning of that worship for Christian discipleship took time to permeate his theology. The Christ of Apol. 21:7, 31-36 is the "philosophic" Teacher and Illuminator of mankind. He is not the object of reverent imitation.

Such an interpretation is open to one objection - an objection which Pass. Perp. 10:8, 7-10, 9, 13 with its profound consciousness of Christ highlights. Despite springing from North African soil, Pass. Perp. 10:8, 7-10:9, 13, 18:9, 17-19, Pass. Mont et Luc. 4:5, 17-4:6, 23 and Pass. Mar. et Iac. 7:3, 31-7:4, 3 did not display a

corresponding reluctance to employ the "imitatio Christi" motif.

This objection could be countered by the assumption that the martyrologists who compiled those works and the martyrs whose deeds and visions they recorded had less personal experience of the cults of Ba'al-Hammon/Saturn and Tanit/Caelestis than Tertullian had enjoyed. However, given the stress upon the shedding of the martyrs' actual blood, in Pass. Perp. 18:3, 3-6, this is a big assumption to make - in the case of the redactor of Pass. Perp. at any rate!

It is more likely, therefore, that the discrepancy may best be explained by a combination of the different casts of mind of the individuals involved and the advance of Christianisation within the Church itself in the interval between 197 A.D. and the late 250's.<sup>25</sup> The capacity of individuals to assimilate new ideas varies and Tertullian may well have had more difficulty in doing so than such North African compatriots as Perpetua and James, whose personal faith (as their visions reveal)<sup>26</sup> was profoundly Christocentric.

Therefore, in response to the question whether the idea of the "imitatio Christi" was indigenous to Tertullian's theological reflections, I must reply in the negative, because it did not form the bedrock of his Christian theology. As a result, when examining those excerpts in which he exhorted his readers to reproduce the qualities of Christ in their own lives, it is important to remember that

they formed an advance upon his earliest Christian thought. Whilst it would be a mistake to dismiss them as a superficial appendage to Tertullian's theology, they were for all that an element which had been superimposed upon his earlier thought. The fact that Tertullian, in time, successfully integrated the idea of imitating Christ into his theology cannot detract from this.

The would-be expositor of the Tertullianic version of the "imitatio Christi" theme need not turn to the ordinary death of the Christian - Tertullian never found a place for the idea in his understanding of ordinary death. Rather, he should turn to the extraordinary death of the martyr.

### 2.3 Martyrdom as following in the footsteps of Christ

Because of his familiarity with the celebrated medieval devotion which exalted the "imitation" of Christ's life,<sup>27</sup> the modern reader comes to Tertullian with the expectation that his vocabulary will be marked heavily by the language of "imitation". This expectation is totally unfulfilled. Tertullian never employed the words "imitator", "imitatio" and "imitari" when seeking to describe the Christian's attempt to reproduce the virtues which had marked Christ's earthly existence.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, they played no part in his theory of martyrdom.

Moreover, although Orat. 4:3, 17 and Monog. 8:7, 45 provide rare instances of the use of "exemplar" and "exemplum" with reference to the person of Christ,<sup>29</sup> such terminology, too,

played a minor role within Tertullian's theory of martyrdom. Scorp. 12:2, 15-16, with its declaration "Christus passus est pro nobis, relinquens uobis exemplum semetipsum", was a direct quotation from I Pet. 2:21, not an example of free composition. Thus, in the strictest sense of the vocabulary of "imitation", Tertullian's theory cannot be classified as "imitatio Christi".

The reason for this silence probably lies with the underlying implications of "copying" and "following an example". Whilst the words can imply a considered and authentic reproduction of the original, they often suggest a mechanical and spurious replication. That Tertullian may indeed have believed that the vocabulary of "imitation" implied a mechanical and spurious replication is demonstrated by Praes. 40:6, 11-16, where he employed the verb "imitari" to the Devil's work of counterfeiting the worship of the true God -

"ceterum si Numae Pompilii superstitiones reuoluamus, si sacerdotalia officia et insignia et priuilegia, si sacrificantium ministeria et instrumenta et uasa, si ipsorum sacrificiorum ac piaculorum et uotorum curiositates consideremus, nonne manifeste diabolus morositatem illam Iudaicae legis imitatus est?"

W.P. de Boer considers that the inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world did not tend to regard copies as spurious and inferior.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, for Tertullian, concerned as he was to uphold the value of the martyr's death and the sincerity of the commitment behind that death,<sup>31</sup> any vocabulary which might have downgraded the martyr's achievement would have been too dangerous. Martyrdom was no



mere mechanical replication of the behaviour of Christ but rather the conscious appropriation of His values and actions as one's own.

At first sight, Pétré's study of Tertullian's use of exempla might seem to contradict such doubts regarding the vocabulary of "copying" or "following an example" - illustrating as it does that he was the heir of classical rhetoric in his predilection for citing exempla in order to win his readers over to a given point of view or course of actions.<sup>32</sup> However, a closer examination of Pétré's own conclusions show that the contradiction is probably more apparent than real. Tertullianic exempla were employed primarily as polemical coup de grâce - not as models to be imitated:

"Beaucoup plus qu'à exhorter et entraîner, il aime à combattre, réfuter, prouver. De là utilisation qu'il a faite le plus souvent de l'exemple. C'est un argument présenté à l'esprit, bien plus qu'un modèle idéal fait pour exciter la volonté par l'admiration et le désir d'imitation. Mais dans ces limites, avec quelle ingéniosité l'auteur a su choisir ses exemples, avec quelle subtilité il les a maniés, réfutant les uns, interprétant les autres, ne reculant pas devant le sophisme qui lui permettra de triompher d'un contradicteur moins habile. C'est surtout à mesure qu'il avance dans le montanisme que ses exemples prennent ce caractère à la fois agressif et juridique, et que l''exemplum' se réduit de plus en plus au rôle de 'praeiudicium'."<sup>33</sup>

So, having noted the language which Tertullian eschewed, let us turn to the language and the concepts which he did employ.

### 2.3.1 Martyrdom - the duty of the neophyte?

To understand Tertullian's reflections upon the appropriate form of "exit" from the Christian life, it is necessary to examine briefly his interpretation of the "entrance" into that life. (It is no coincidence that when seeking to counter apostasy, in Fug. 10:2, 16-17, he reminded his readers of their experience within the font. Discipleship was bound up intimately with baptism).

At his baptism, the candidate had died with his Lord (that is, died to his sins) and had risen again with Him to a new life of faith.<sup>34</sup> That Tertullian fervently believed this to have been the case can be seen by such extracts as Resurr. 47:10, 35-47:12, 44, Pud. 17:5, 16-17:6, 22 and Bapt. 19:1, 1-2.<sup>35</sup> For him, baptism was a form of spiritual death. The neophyte had not merely appropriated the benefits of the Passion in his own person - though Bapt. 2:1, 3-2:2, 19, 4:5, 30-34 and Resurr. 8:3, 8-9 did maintain that baptism was the divinely appointed channel of cleansing and forgiveness. The neophyte had come into union with the Risen Lord - in the words of Fug. 10:2, 16-17, "Christum indutus es, siquidem in Christum tinctus es, qui fugis diabolum".

With its connotations of "putting on" an "article of dress" or an "ornament", the word "induere" suggests that an almost physical intimacy prevailed between the candidate in the font and his Saviour. At all events, it implied that there was a close relationship between the two.



It is in the magnitude of the privilege which baptism accords that the response demanded of the neophyte has its root. Only by a momentous response to his baptism can the neophyte show his gratitude to his Lord. Thus, he must revolutionise his standard of behaviour.

Logically, the sacramental union with Christ demands that that revolution should be governed by the pattern of life laid down by his new Master. In his earliest works (notably, Mart. and Apol.) this appears to have escaped Tertullian's notice. However, by the time he composed Fug. 10:2, 16-18, he had come to recognise this. In that extract, it is just because his Saviour had not submitted to the devil that the Christian must not flee from him. The background to Tertullian's line of reasoning is the victory which Christ achieved over the Devil when he sought to tempt Him in the wilderness. As Ieiun. 8:2, 33-8:2, 2 appreciated, the crucial lesson of the temptations narratives is that man is obliged to subdue the "old" man and to reject the promptings of the Devil:

"Immo nouum hominem in ueteris sugillationem uirtute fastidiendi cibi initiabat, ut eum diabolo rursus per escam temptare quaerenti fortiolem fame tota ostentaret".

If baptism was undergone with honesty of purpose, its impact upon the subsequent life of the neophyte must have been immense. Although, in Paen. 6:17, 61-62, Tertullian deliberately exaggerated, in order to thrust home his point, that excerpt points to the magnitude of the transformation

which the Christian owed to his new Master - "non ideo abluimur ut delinquere desinamus sed quia desiimus."

However, the neophyte's moulding of his behaviour upon that of his Saviour could not be confined to copying His life. Christ had endured hatred and persecution; Christ had died. In passages like Pat. 3:9, 30-34, Cor. 14:3, 14-14:4, 30 and Marc. III. 7:7, 1-7,<sup>36</sup> Christ's example was set before Tertullian's readers in stark terms.

Christ had been steadfast when faced by the terrors of death and the torments of the Evil One; the Christian was called to be steadfast when faced by those same terrors and torments. Fug. 8:1, 5-11 and 8:3, 19-23 with their emphasis on Christ's staunch adherence to the will of the Father (despite the frailty of His flesh) are not dissimilar to Mart. 4:2, 15-4:3, 23, where the martyr's duty to overcome his fears is taught. Similarly, the juxtaposition of Marc. V 6:7, 9-13 and Ieiun. 17:8, 20-25 highlights the fact that both Master and disciple face the same enemy. Where the martyrs now walked, Christ had already trod.

Similar parallels are revealed when Tertullian's sacrificial soteriology is contrasted with his martyr ideology. Christ has offered Himself to the Father as an oblation of love and a sacrifice of expiation;<sup>37</sup> the Christian was called to offer himself to his God as an expression of his love and an offering for his own sins.<sup>38</sup>

The value of these analogies for teaching the neophyte his duty to his Lord are yet more striking when it is recalled that, in Carn. 5:4, 25-5:6, 37, Tertullian taught that contemplation of the Passion guards the Christian against the blandishments of Doceitism. If the contemplation of the cross teaches the subject that Christ's flesh was genuine, might it not also teach him the meaning of true discipleship?

Excerpts such as Cor. 14:3, 14-14:4, 32 and Fug. 12:2, 17-12:3, 36, which conclude their harrowing descriptions of the torments inflicted upon Christ with calls to the faithful to make a response to those torments, suggest that Tertullian was indeed not unaware of the value of the contemplation of the cross for true discipleship. In the words of Cor. 14:3, 14-14:4, 32:

"Qui tamen et uiri caput est et feminae facies, ut uir ecclesiae, Christus Iesus, quale, oro te, sertum pro utroque sexu subilit? Ex spinis opinor et tribulis. Si in figuram delictorum, quae nobis protulit terra carnis, abstulit autem uirtus crucis, omnem aculeum mortis in dominici capitis tolerantia obtundens, certe praeter figuram contumelia in promptu est et dedecoratio et turpitudine et his implexa saeuitia. Quae si tunc domini tempora et foedauerunt et lancinauerunt, uti quid tu nunc laurea et myrto et olea et inlustriore quaque fronde et, quod magis usui est, centenariis quoque rosis ex Midae horto lectis et utrisque liliis et omnibus uiolis coroneris, etiam gemmis forsitan et auro? Ut et illam Christi coronam aemuleris, quae postea ei obuenit? At quin et fauos post fella gustauit nec ante rex gloriae a caelestibus salutatus est, quam 'rex Iudaeorum' proscriptus in cruce, minoratus primo a patre modicum quid citra angelos, et ita gloria et honore coronatus. Si ob haec caput ei tuum debes, tale, si potes, ei repende, quale suum pro tuo obtulit."

Moving though such excerpts are, there is one difficulty which prevents a precise assessment of the place of such contemplation in Tertullianic Christianity. As Fug. 8:3, 17-21 and Orat. 4:5, 23-29 illustrate, it is not always possible to determine where the impact of contemplating the cross ended and that of contemplating Gethsemane began. Both teach self-abnegation.

Thus, in the writings of Tertullian, there are the materials for a theology in which "the imitation of Christ" is quite definitely the neophyte's duty - I would go further, there are the materials for a theology in which the imitation of the Passion is the neophyte's duty. However, the materials are scattered throughout Tertullian's works and he never worked them into a coherent theory.

#### 2.3.2 Martyrdom - the payment of a debt

"Age iam, quid de ea (the flesh) sentis ... cum iam et in luce omni tormentorum machinatione laniatur, cum denique subpliciis erogatur, enisa reddere Christo uicem moriendo pro ipso, et quidem per eandem crucem saepe, nedum per atrociora quoque ingenia poenarum? Ne illa beatissima et gloriosissima, quae potest apud Christum dominum parere debito tanto, ut hoc solum debeat ei, quod ei debere desierit, hoc magis uincta quo absoluta!"

Here, in Resurr. 8:5, 19 and 8:5, 24-8:6, 30, Tertullian asserted that there can be no act more glorious for the Christian than that by which he attempts to "repay" his Lord for the anguish which He underwent on his behalf at Calvary. Thus, in Tertullian's theory, the language of "imitation" is replaced amongst others by language which is evocative of

the debtor and his creditor. "Debitum", "debere", "reddere" and "rependere", it was in such language that he chose to describe the situation which prevailed between the martyr and his Lord.<sup>39</sup> In Resurr. 8:6, 28-30, the weight was upon the Christian's indebtedness to his Saviour and the need for him to respond to that indebtedness - "quae potest apud Christum dominum parere debito tanto, ut hoc solum debeat ei, quod ei debere desierit". In Resurr. 8:5, 25-26 and Pat. 16:5, 16-17, the weight was upon the Christian's attempt to repay Christ - "enisa reddere Christo uicem moriendo pro ipso" and "rependamus illi quam pro nobis ipse dependit", respectively. In Cor. 14:4, 31-32, the weight was upon the appropriate manner of repayment - "si ob haec caput ei tuum debes, tale, si potes, ei repende, quale suum pro tuo obtulit".

Read in their most literal sense, the lesson of these passages is that martyrdom is the act whereby the Christian seeks to make a token repayment to Christ for the anguish and agony which He underwent for him on Calvary. That imperfect compensation takes the form of an oblation of faith; faith which is so firm that it remains unshaken in the fact of the ultimate anguish and agony. Scorp. 9:9, 17-9:10, 6 reminds the reader that "confession" of Christ was an integral part of martyrdom. Such an oblation of love and endurance is the culmination of true discipleship. Resurr. 8:5, 19-8:6, 30 and Pat. 16:5, 15-18 indicate that that oblation has its starting point in the Christian's recognition of his own indebtedness to Christ.

How literally should these extracts be read? Therein lies the problem. It could be claimed that the language of "repayment" is being used loosely, without any suggestion of "cancelling out" a debt. Nonetheless, even in a phrase such as "to repay generosity", the connotations are that the one person is under an obligation to the other.

A closer examination of Resurr. 8:5, 25-26 and 8:6, 28-30 reveals, however, that Tertullian was thinking not in the abstract but rather in highly concrete terms. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that Resurr. 8:5, 25-26 drew a direct parallel between the cross to which the martyr was obliged to submit and that endured by his Master - "enisa reddere Christo uicem moriendo pro ipso, et quidem per eandem crucem saepe".

Furthermore, it is significant that the language of "payment" figured large in Tertullian's soteriology. (It even appeared in Pat. 16:5, 17 itself in the shape of the word "dependere"). If Tertullian understood the language of "ransom" literally - as Fug. 12:3, 24-26 and Pud. 16:10, 38-43 demonstrate - would it not have been reasonable for him to have also so understood the language of "debt" and "repayment"?

By taking seriously the role of the Christian's indebtedness to his Saviour in Tertullian's theology of martyrdom, martyrdom is transformed from an optional adjunct to Christian discipleship into a fundamental obligation of discipleship. If Martyrdom was a response which the



disciple had to adopt voluntarily,<sup>40</sup> it was the response which the true disciple would choose.

However, martyrdom as the payment of the Christian's debt to his Master is not without its paradox. An obligation which is incumbent upon all Christians, the payment of that debt must be performed not grudgingly but in the spirit of love. Thus, the author of Pat. 16:5, 15-16 urged the Christian disciple to "love" the "patience" of Christ - the patience for which he is seeking to recompense his Lord.

This is not to claim that Tertullian believed that the martyr could ever succeed in cancelling out his debt to the One who endured Calvary. Resurr. 8:6, 29-30 with its reference to the martyr "ceasing" to owe anything to Christ was simply an example of enthusiastic hyperbole. To regard it otherwise would be to find Tertullian guilty of diminishing the momentous character of the Incarnation and the incomparable status of the Passion. To such a charge Tertullian would have justly pled "not guilty".<sup>41</sup>

Instead, it is to recognise that, in his eyes, discipleship was grounded in man's state of obligation to Christ. As a result, the Tertullianic version of the "imitatio Christ" is a stern, relentless and uncompromising ethic.

Nonetheless, for all its virtues in obliging the faithful to regard martyrdom as a duty, can any theory which depends upon the language of debt and repayment be categorised as a genuine "imitatio Christi" theory? In the case of

Tertullian, I will reply with a cautious affirmative, because he was quite clear that the Christian's obligation to Christ can be discharged only in kind. The martyr must offer his Lord personal anguish and agony - anguish and agony such as He had endured on Calvary. Thus, Resurr. 8:5, 26 refers to the martyr suffering "per eandem crucem saepe" and Cor. 14:4, 32 urges the Christian to repay Christ "quale suum pro tuo obtulit".

### 2.3.3 Martyrdom - the duty of the faithful slave

"Et ideo : 'non est discipulus super magistrum, statim sequitur, nec seruus super dominum suum', quia cum magister et dominus ipse perpessus sit persecutionem et traditionem et occisionem, multo magis serui et discipuli eadem expendere debebunt, ne quasi superiores exempti de iniquitate uideantur, quando hoc ipsum sufficere eis ad gloriam debeat, aequari passionibus domini et magistri."

Here, in Scorp. 9:6, 21-27, Tertullian reminded his readers that the Christian has no right to refuse to tramp the road of suffering which his Master trod, since a "slave" should not appear superior to his Master or a "disciple" superior to his Lord. However, if Scorp. 9:6, 21-27 is to be understood properly, it is necessary to grasp Tertullian's concept of Christian enslavement to Christ.

One of the finest expressions of Christian enslavement to Christ is to be found in Idol. 18:5, 10-13. There, Tertullian declares that the Christian (whatever his worldly status) is, in truth, the slave of Christ alone:

"Nam illi etiam condicione serui erant : tu uero nullius seruus, in quantum solius Christi, qui te



etiam captiuitate saeculi liberauit, ex forma dominica agere debebis."

His reasoning ran as follows. By virtue of Christ's blood (paid as a "ransom") the Christian has been redeemed - to quote Fug. 12:3, 28-34,

"et dominus quidem illum redemit ab angelis munditenentibus, a potestatibus, a spiritalibus nequitiae, a tenebris huius aeui, a iudicio aeterno, a morte perpetua; tu autem pro eo pacisceris cum delatore uel milite uel furunculo aliquo praeside sub tunica et sinu, quod aiunt, ut furtiuo, quem coram toto mundo Christus emit, immo et manumisit!"

Therefore, as a result of that redemption, the Christian has become the actual "property" of his Saviour. In the words of Uxor. II.3:1, 10-11:

"Quod sciam, non sumus nostri, sed pretio empti. Et quali pretio! Sanguine dei!".

As was the case with Pud. 16:10, 38-43,<sup>42</sup> the moral of Uxor. II.3:1, 1-3:2, 17 is that the Christian must shun immorality, because to fail to do so would be to deface and even destroy the property of another - that is, man, the property of Christ. The property rights of our Lord brought Him the right to demand absolute obedience from His followers. Therefore, they transformed Christian service into Christian "servitude" - albeit the exigencies of that servitude are ameliorated by the loving character of the Master.

For an exposition of Tertullian's theology of martyrdom, the word "seruus" is highly significant, because it is the word which the Vetus Latina employs when translating Mt. 10:24-

25. However, before developing the implications of such a notion of Christian servitude, there are major objections to be faced.

"Seruus", like its Hebrew and Greek counterparts "ebed" and "δούλος", can mean both "a slave" and "a servant". Many of Tertullian's modern translators have chosen to render "seruus" by the word "servant". Hence, the Sources Chrétiennes versions of Pat. 4:1, 5 and Uxor. II. 8:7, 43 speak in their turn of "nous les serviteurs de Dieu vivant" and "serviteurs d'un même maître".<sup>43</sup> In so doing, they focus upon the difference between enslavement to a human master and service of a divine one.

Nevertheless, for all its virtue in distancing the service of God from the injustices which marked human slavery such a translation overlooks the predominance of slavery within the ancient world. Hence, it ignores the fact that, for Tertullian, a "servant" frequently must have been none other than a "slave".

To engage in a battle of statistics as to the precise numbers of slaves who toiled in the Greco-Roman world would be of limited value to the matter in hand. Moreover, as T.E.J. Wiedemann has observed, such an undertaking is extremely hazardous.<sup>44</sup>

Of far more value is an appreciation of the role of slaves as household servants and agricultural labourers in Roman

society at the time of the Empire. Of this role, Wiedemann has concluded:

"It was a mechanism for ensuring that services would be guaranteed to the primary economic unit, the household."<sup>45</sup>

It was this function of supplying the daily needs of the society in which he lived which may well have predisposed Tertullian to equate service and servitude.

That Tertullian was indeed so predisposed can be illustrated by Cult. II. 10:5, 29-36, where he assumed that the disciplining of household slaves was part of the daily routine of his contemporaries. In that passage, he cast God in the role of the head of the household ("paterfamilias"), a "paterfamilias" who exercised supreme authority over His dependants - testing the virtue of His slaves, dealing out rewards and punishments. I quote:

"Quanto enim utilius et cautius egerimus, si praesumamus omnia quidem a deo prouisa tunc et in saeculo posita, at uti nunc essent in quibus disciplina seruorum eius probaretur, ut per licentiam utendi continentiae experimenta procederunt? Nonne sapientes patresfamiliae de industria quaedam seruis suis offerunt atque permittunt, ut experiantur, an et qualiter permissis utantur, si probe, si moderate?"

Whilst it is true that the word "familia" included "free servants" as well as "the slaves in a household", the military overtones of the word "disciplina"<sup>46</sup> suggest that, on this occasion, Tertullian had a situation of absolute authority and total obedience in mind. Such a situation prevailed between the slave and his master.

Another objection which might be made to the interpretation of the "seruus Christi" as the "slave of Christ" is that, in Idol. 18:5, 10-13, the analogy between service to Christ and human slavery was forced upon Tertullian by his desire to compare and contrast the Christian's status with that of Joseph and Daniel during their captivity in Egypt and Babylon.<sup>47</sup> Despite the privileges which Joseph and Daniel enjoyed, they had remained enslaved to a human master. Therefore, since they lacked freedom of choice, their acceptance of high office with all its trappings does not create a precedent for the Christian.<sup>48</sup> By playing on the word "dominus" and naming the Christian the "slave" of Christ,<sup>49</sup> Tertullian is able to remind his readers that their ultimate loyalty is owed not to man but to God.

The fact that Idol. 18:5, 10-13 can be interpreted as a response to the dilemma posed by Idol. 17:1, 10-17 might seem to reinforce this objection. Posed with questions about where the human slave's ultimate loyalty should lie and to whom he should render absolute obedience, Tertullian declares that such loyalty and obedience are due to the divine Master.

I grant that these factors probably played their part in moulding Idol. 18:5, 10-13. What I dispute, however, is that these factors are incompatible with a genuine adherence to the belief that the Christian is the "slave of Christ". In this, I am supported by J.H. Waszink and J.C.M. Van Winden:

"The Christian is the slave of nobody (that is, of no human being); in so far as he is still a slave, he is a slave of Christ only, who has liberated him from the captivity of the world. In this context we should first of all notice the (faulty) etymology of 'seruus' found in Gaius, Inst. 1, 3,3: 'Serui autem ex eo appellati sunt, quod imperatores captiuos uendere iubent ac per hoc seruare nec occidere solent'. Thus the Christians are free, because Christ has liberated them from the 'captivity' of the world (the captivity being regarded as the origin of slavery). However, they remain slaves of Christ, because every slave has a 'dominus' and the Christians venerate 'Dominum Iesum Christum' (Tertullian plays on the two meanings of d(D)ominus)."50

Assuming that Tertullian did understand the "seruus Christi" as the "slave" of Christ, what effect did this understanding have upon his theory of martyrdom? Absolute authority on the part of the master and unqualified obedience on the part of the slave - these were the very marrow of the relationship which prevailed between the human slave and the human master. Although a contemporary of Tertullian, the jurist Ulpian recognised that slaves were excused from obeying their masters when they were issued commands, the fulfilment of which would render them guilty of dreadful crimes - "quae non habent atrocitatem" - it is most unlikely that this concession provided slaves with much latitude.<sup>51</sup>

The key to the relationship between the two was that the slave was the property of his master. Indeed, in the eyes of the law, the slave had been deprived of his personality and had become a thing. To quote W.W. Buckland:

"The slave is a chattel, frequently paired off with money as a 'res'. Not only is he a chattel : he is treated constantly in the sources as the typical chattel."<sup>52</sup>

The slave had no rights.<sup>53</sup> Any protection which the law afforded to him was aimed not at the protection of his person as such but at the protection of his master's investment in him.<sup>54</sup> The only limitation upon his master's right to punish him was a prohibition upon deliberately putting him to death.<sup>55</sup> This, one of the few restrictions on the power of the master over his slave, was the result of the Lex Cornelia. Making it a capital offence to kill a man, that law specifically "included slaves in the term 'homo'."<sup>56</sup> (In other words, Roman society was so accustomed to the idea that slaves were chattels that the said law had to state explicitly that they were men!).

When transposed into martyr theology, the Christian's enslavement to Christ means that he is subject to the absolute authority of his Saviour. Like his secular counterpart, he owes his Master total obedience. To put it in Biblical terms with which Tertullian himself was familiar, man cannot "serve" two "masters"<sup>57</sup> - the obedience which he owes Christ is not partial, it is total.

The will of Christ with respect to martyrdom was clear and unequivocal.<sup>58</sup> That will is enunciated particularly vividly in Mt. 10. In Mt. 10:38 the Christian is exhorted to "take up" his "cross" and in Mt. 10:28, he is urged to face without "fear" the death of the "body".<sup>59</sup> In Mt. 10:22 he is promised salvation for "enduring" to the "end" and in Mt. 10:39, he is warned that whoever seeks to "save" his life will lose it.<sup>60</sup> Since Tertullian frequently quoted from Mt. 10:16-39<sup>61</sup>, one of the prerequisites for martyrdom as the



duty of the faithful slave is fulfilled - that is, that its author should focus upon the commands of the slaves' Master.

Even the right of Christ to order the martyr to his death was not totally at variance with the contemporary theory of human slavery. Just as the captive owed his life to the goodwill of the conqueror,<sup>62</sup> the Christian owed his new life to the goodwill of the Conqueror of evil. Owing their very lives to that Conqueror, it was merely the extension of the conqueror's power of life and death if later that same Conqueror commanded them to die. The analogy is, I grant, not without its flaw. The faithful were not so much the prisoners of Christ as the booty which He won from Satan.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, the contemporary view that military conquerors have power over the lives of those who came into their hands does provide a precedent (albeit an imperfect one) by which to interpret Christ's power of life and death over His slaves.

All-demanding and all-embracing, the "Lordship" of Christ permeated Tertullian's reflections on martyrdom. By branding the Christian the "slave" of Christ, Tertullian imbued an excerpt such as Scorp. 9:6, 21-27 with a profound consciousness that the will of the Christian is subordinated to that of Christ - I might even go so far as to say that he imbued it with an element of moral coercion. To follow in the footsteps of the Master (even unto the cross) is not optional but mandatory.

As was the case with martyrdom as the payment of a debt, however, the question has to be - can the obedience offered by the "slave of Christ" truly be characterised as an expression of the "imitatio Christi" motif?

Obedience to the will of a master and the imitation of the actions of that master are not necessarily the same thing. Yet, in Idol. 18:5, 13, Tertullian regarded such an imitation of a master's character as the expression of true obedience - "ex forma dominica agere debebis". A similar picture emerges from Pat. 4:1, 1-2 and 4:1, 4-5 - "igitur si probos quosque seruos et bonae mentis pro ingenio dominico conuersari uidemus ... quanto magis nos secundum dominum moratos inueniri oportet". The life of the Christian should acquire its characteristic stamp from that of Christ; he should obey the "pattern" ("forma") laid down by his Master.

It is in the classical tradition that the moral character of slaves bears a relation to that of their master that a possible explanation for Tertullian's conflation of the distinct ideas of obeying and copying may be found. Something of the flavour of that tradition can be obtained from Xenophon:

"When a master sets an example of carelessness, it is difficult for the slave to learn to be careful ... I don't think I can remember the case of good slaves belonging to a bad master."<sup>64</sup>

Whilst Tertullian never quoted this tradition, Pat. 4:1, 1-2 with its assumption that a good slave moulds his behaviour upon that of his master suggests that he was not unfamiliar with it.



So what was the "pattern" which the Christian's Master laid down and how did it contribute to Tertullian's theology of martyrdom? One of the finest of the Tertullianic expositions of Christ's life is to be found in Pat. 3:2, 4-3:9, 34. Although it is true that Pat. 4:1, 5 described the Christian not as the slave of Christ but as the slave of God, it is surely significant that that exposition of Christ's life stands adjacent to his assertion that good slaves are duty bound to obey the "model" of their Master. The Incarnate Son is the visible sign of the Invisible Father.<sup>65</sup>

The pattern set by the Master was one of humility - in the words of Pat. 3:2, 4 and 3:3, 8, "nasci se deus patitur" and "cum de domino fit magister". The pattern set by the Master was one of forbearance - in the words of Pat. 3:7, 25-27, "ille cui legiones angelorum si uoluisset uno dicto de caelis adfuissent, ne unius quidem discentis gladium ultorem probauit". The pattern set by the Master was one of courage and endurance - in the words of Pat. 3:9, 33-34, "despuitur uerberatur deridetur, foedis uestitur, foedioribus coronatur". Submitting oneself to the pattern set by the Lord - the word adopted by Tertullian in Pat. 4:1, 4 was "subicere" - demands a willingness to undergo situations which require humility, courage and endurance. Martyrdom is the supreme instance of such a situation.

Similar patterns of courage and endurance in the face of immense suffering can be found in Cor. 14:3, 14-14:4, 32 and

Fug. 12:2, 17-20. Moreover, as Cor. 14:4, 31-32 and Fug. 12:3, 34-36 illustrate, they were patterns which were not lost upon Tertullian.

The way of the Lord was not the way of ease - to quote Uxor. I. 4:2, 11-13, "sed utraque repudianda est a seruis dei, qui et luxuriae et ambitioni renuntiamus". Instead, it was the difficulty, stony path dictated by His love for and obedience to the Will of the Father. As Fug. 8:3, 17-21 saw clearly, it was the path walked by the man who joined his Master in asking God to subordinate his own will to that of the Almighty. In Tertullian's own words:

"Postulavit et ipse (Christ) a patre, si fieri posset, ut transiret ab illo calix passionis. Postula et tu, sed stans ut ille, sed postulans tantum, sed subiungens et reliqua: 'uerum non quod ego uolo, sed quod tu'. Fugiens autem quomodo hoc postulabis, ipse tibi calicis praestans translationem, nec quod pater uult faciens, sed quod tu?"

Because Tertullian did display familiarity with the pattern established by his Lord and recognition that the behaviour of the "slave of Christ" should bear a close relation to that of his Master, I believe that (with qualifications) martyrdom as the duty of the faithful slave may indeed be described as an expression of the "imitatio Christi" theme. Prominent amongst those qualifications are its failure to accord a sufficiently important role to the martyr's personal decision to "confess" Christ and its failure to highlight the fact that martyrdom is a response of love.<sup>66</sup> Nonetheless, the fact that Christian "servitude" (as it is found in the writings of Tertullian) spurred the faithful on

to mould their lives on that of their Master overrides these hesitations.

Martyrdom as the act of the obedient slave is not, however, without its ambiguities. Within the writings of Tertullian, the Christian was depicted not merely as the "slave of Christ" but also as the "friend" of Christ and the man "freed" by Christ. In Carn. 15:6, 42-43, he looks forward to the time when Christ will share (with His "friends") His triumph over His enemies<sup>67</sup> - the triumph which will take place (as Spect. 30:6, 26-32 and Marc. III, 7:6, 18-26 appreciate) at the Parousia and the final judgement. In Cor. 13:5, 33-13:6, 38, he faced up to the paradox of Christian enslavement to Christ and Christian freedom in Christ:

"Nam et tunc liber hominis eras, redemptus a Christo, et nunc seruus es Christi, licet manumissus sis ab homine. Si ueram putes saeculi libertatem, ut et corona eam consignes, redisti in seruitutem hominis, quam putas libertatem, amisisti libertatem Christi, quam non putasti libertatem, sed seruitutem".

Indeed, in its desire to prove that the freedom of this world is illusory and that the only true freedom is the freedom granted by Christ, Cor. 13:6, 38 goes so far as to deny that the service of Christ is a form of "slavery".

If the Christian is a free man, how can he be duty bound to give his life in martyrdom? If he is a friend of Christ, how can he be in a state of subordination to Him?

One method of overcoming the apparent contradiction between Cor. 13:5, 33-13:6, 38 and Idol. 18:5, 10-13 would be to dismiss the former passage as exaggeration - exaggeration born of Tertullian's desire to distance Christian service from the abuses and the onerous duties of human enslavement. Although this may have been partially true, it would be to dismiss Cor. 13:5, 33-13:6, 38 far too easily.

Another method of overcoming this apparent contradiction would be to regard the Christian as the freedman of Christ. However, there is an obstacle to such an interpretation. In the key passage, Cor. 13:5, 33-13:6, 38, it was the word denoting freedom by birth which Tertullian chose, not that marking the condition of the freedman. He described the Christian's condition as that of "libertas" not that of "libertinitas".

Since Braun has noted correctly that there is no theory of the "rights" of the Devil in Tertullianic soteriology<sup>68</sup> (Paen. 5:7, 23-5:8, 32 and Fug. 2:6, 52-60 expressing merely the fact that the wicked remain subject to the illegal dominion of the Devil) one reason for Tertullian's avoidance of the word "libertinitas" could have been his belief that the dominion exercised by the Devil is illegitimate. According to Roman law, a slave illegally enslaved could reaffirm his "libertas".<sup>69</sup> Another reason may have been that since man had been in a state of bondage to Satan, any use of the title "libertus" could have been misinterpreted as implying that the duties owed by the Christian freedman were due to Satan rather than to Christ.

Nonetheless, for all his failure to adopt the term "libertinitas", Tertullian does not seem to have rejected the concept of the "freedman" itself. He was profoundly aware that by virtue of the Passion, he had been freed from the power of sin, death and the Devil.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, it may be significant that, in Cor. 13:5, 34, it was the language associated with ransoming captives which Tertullian chose, that is, the verb "redemptare". It may also be significant that, in Cor. 13:5, 35, he practically equated the ransom paid by Christ with the act of manumission.

According to Roman law, until he could reimburse the person by whom he had been ransomed, the former captive was in a state of obligation to that person.<sup>71</sup> Though not his slave, he was in a position akin to slavery. For all the oratorical optimism of Resurr. 8:6, 27-30, Tertullian recognised that the Christian could never repay Christ for the agony he underwent on the cross. As for the secular freedman, he continued to owe his former master "obsequium", "officium" and "operae".<sup>72</sup> Indeed, describing these obligations, Wiedemann declared:

"In the Roman world, most freed slaves were obligated to provide their erstwhile masters with a range of services which had the effect of making the freedman's state of dependence just as tight, if not as exacting, as that of the slave."<sup>73</sup>

To honour Christ and to serve Him<sup>74</sup> - these were characteristics of the Christian life. It is surely noteworthy that, in Spect. 1:4, 17 and Pat. 4:1, 3, when seeking to describe the obedience which man owes to God,

Tertullian implicitly equated the situation of the Christian with that of the freedman, by employing a word which was commonly applied to the duties of the freedman to his patron, that is, the word "obsequium".<sup>75</sup>

There is, I grant, a difference between the idea of a slave and that of a freedman. Tertullian was indeed guilty of enlisting first one and then the other (depending on the exegenesies of his argument). Nevertheless, because Christ was the Christian's "patronus" (with all the onerous duties which that entailed for the Christian) the reality of freedom in Christ must not have been very different to that of enslavement to Christ. The act of a faithful slave, martyrdom could equally well be the "opera" performed for the martyr's "patronus" Christ. It is a fascinating possibility.

As for the distinction between subjection to Christ and intimacy with Him - the distinction raised by Carn. 15:6, 42-43 - this dichotomy is softened by an examination of Spect. 2:5, 22-27. In Spect. 2:5, 23, the word which Tertullian selected to express that intimacy, "familiaris" is the word for a domestic servant as well as that for a friend.

So, what was the impact upon martyrdom of the image of the Christian as the slave of Christ? As was noted above, martyrdom as the duty of the faithful slave tended to downplay the personal decision of the martyr to "confess"



Christ and the fact that martyrdom is a response of love. Furthermore, inasmuch as it accorded pride of place to obedience to Christ, it tended to cause the example of the Passion to assume a subordinate role. Obedience to Christ may well have included obedience to His example on Calvary (indeed, in key passages it does) but it depended as much on Christ's words as upon His actions.

Finally, as well as raising again the question of the extent of Tertullian's legal knowledge,<sup>76</sup> the image of slavery charged his version of the "imitatio Christi" motif with a harshness and a severity which refused to allow for compromise. The martyr was subject to his Master; his death was only his duty.

#### 2.3.4      Enslavement to God - who really was the Christian's Master?

The word "seruus" was applied to the Christian, in the sense of the "slave" of the Divine, some fifty times in the course of Tertullian's works.<sup>77</sup> Surprisingly, however, out of those fifty examples only twelve explicitly distinguish that enslavement as subjection to Christ.<sup>78</sup> From this it may be deduced that, for Tertullian, Christian enslavement was ultimately an enslavement to God.

This predilection for the phrase "the slave of God" was not confined to any particular period of his life. The phrase appears in such relatively early works as Spect. 1:1, 4-5 ("dei serui ... qui cum maxime ad deum acceditis") and Uxor.

I. 5:1, 7-8 ("nimirum necessaria suboles seruo dei"). It is still to be found in such late works as Resurr. 52:12, 44-45 ("'alia caro hominis', id est serui dei, qui uere homo est") and Cast. 12:3, 17 ("heredes dei seruus desiderabit, qui semetipsum de saeculo exhereditauit").

By and large, of course, the distinction between the phrases "the slave of God" and "the slave of Christ" is an academic one. Tertullian's God is a Trinitarian God<sup>79</sup> (so that the Son is God, just as the Father is God) and the Father has conferred all power and authority on the Son.<sup>80</sup>

Since authority over His creation is an essential characteristic of Deity,<sup>81</sup> it is not unreasonable that God the Father should be described as man's "dominus". The essential connotations of the word "dominus" are those of sovereignty. Discussing God's right to the title "dominus", Braun states that it is "predicat de la souveraineté absolue de Dieu sur ses creatures" and discussing His possession of "potetas", he observed that "dans un très grand nombre de passages où Tertullien utilise l'expression 'diuina' (ou 'dei') 'potestas', il entend par là l'autorité, la puissance du maître absolu sur la créature."<sup>82</sup> Thus, it is highly appropriate that the Christian should be described as the "slave of God", that is, the "slave" of the Father. Indeed, even when Tertullian specifically stated that Christian enslavement is enslavement to the Son, the fact that the Son held all His authority by virtue of the will of the Father<sup>83</sup> means that such enslavement cannot cancel out



man's enslavement to God. It simply expresses it in another form.

On the other hand, because Christ is the visible manifestation of the Invisible Father,<sup>84</sup> it is only by turning to the example which the Incarnate Son has set him that the slave of God can see in a tangible form the divine pattern which God desires him to copy - for to see the Son is to see the Father.<sup>85</sup> Thus, Christian enslavement to the Father cannot cancel out man's enslavement to the Son. Pat. 4:1, 1-7 only becomes a practical plan for action when it is read in conjunction with Pat. 3:1, 1-3:10, 37:

"Igitur si probos quosque seruos et bonae mentis pro ingenio dominico conuersari uidemus - siquidem artificium promerendi obsequium est, obsequii uero disciplina morigera subiectio est -, quanto magis nos secundum dominum moratos inueniri oportet, seruos scilicet dei uiui, cuius iudicium in suos non in compede aut pilleo uertitur sed in aeternitate aut poenae aut salutis?"  
(Pat. 4:1, 1-7).

Nevertheless, the fact that Tertullian had a marked preference for thinking in terms of enslavement to God is surely an indication that his personal faith never became thoroughly Christocentric - certainly not as Christocentric as his assertions in Carn. 5:4, 26-5:5, 33 might lead the reader to expect. The contemplation of the Passion might have filled Tertullian with wonder but throughout his life he remained profoundly conscious of the awe-inspiring power and the unshakeable authority of the Father.<sup>86</sup>

This is confirmed by the distribution of Tertullian's explicit references to the phrase "the slave of Christ".

Contrary to what might be expected had the mature Tertullian's thought become thoroughly Christocentric, the vast majority of his applications of the phrase "the slave of Christ" appear in his early pastoral epistles. Hence, Paen. 7:8, 28-29 declared that Satan "dolet quod ipsum et angelos eius Christo seruus ille peccator iudicaturus est" and Pat. 8:1, 4-5 averred that "absit a seruo Christi tale inquinamentum ut patientia maioribus temptationibus praeparata in friuolis excidat". Tertullian's awareness of Christ's mission may have deepened between his composition of Apol. 21:7, 31-36 and Carn. 5:4, 26-5:5, 33 but there remain signs that throughout his life he failed to assimilate fully the implications for discipleship of the Christian's enslavement to Christ.

This does not mean that, within his theory of martyrdom, the idea of following in the footsteps of the Master should be dismissed as window dressing. Tertullian's own response to such Biblical summons as Mt. 10:24-25, 10:38 and 16:24 was far<sup>91</sup> too profound for such an interpretation to hold good. However, it is a warning against elevating the motif of following in the way of Christ so far as to make it the decisive motif within his theology of martyrdom.

Martyrdom as the duty of Christ's faithful "slave" was, in itself, a stern, uncompromising ethic. This despite the fact that according to Pat. 16:5, 15-18, Cor. 14:3, 14-14:4, 31 and Fug. 12:3, 34-36, his Master had loved His slaves so much that He had been prepared to die for their sake. Juxtaposed alongside such a view of martyrdom, the

Christian's enslavement to the Father must have exacerbated the awesome characters of the martyr's duty. The Father may be the God who sent His Son to die on the cross (Fug. 12:2, 11-20) but He is also the God who is the Supreme Master of the Universe (Prax. 4:2, 4-22) - the ultimate Chastiser of sin (Pud. 2:1, 1-2:8, 34).

#### 2.3.5 Martyrdom - the culmination of the call to discipleship

"Agnosce itaque differentiam ethnici et fidelis in morte, si pro deo occumbas, ut paracletus monet, non in mollibus febribus et in lectulis, sed in martyriis, si crucem tuam tollas et sequaris dominum, ut ipse praecepit. Tota paradisi clavis tuus sanguis est."

Anim. 55:5, 36-40 leaves the reader in no doubt that death by martyrdom is the only fitting culmination of the Christian's attempt to respond to Christ's summons to "follow" Him. For the Christian to die comfortably in bed is for him to renegue upon his obligations.<sup>88</sup>

Therefore, it is amazing that out of some one hundred and forty-six examples of the word "sequi" in his works, a mere seventeen of them were enlisted by Tertullian to describe the disciple's attempt to respond to Christ and to live out his faith.<sup>89</sup> What is more, out of the said seventeen, a mere five examples referred explicitly to discipleship culminating in martyrdom.<sup>90</sup>

The picture is similar when his use of compounds of the word "sequi" is examined, compounds such as "consequi" and

"obsequi". Tertullian did find a place for such compounds when speaking of discipleship - to quote Pat. 8:3, 15-16, "igitur dominum serui consequamur et maledicamur patienter ut benedicti esse possimus". However, he never utilised such compounds to describe the act of following Jesus of Nazareth unto death.

An examination of the five occasions on which Tertullian associated "following" Christ with martyrdom provide a valuable insight into his thought. With the exception of Idol. 12:2, 14 which probably should be dated between 203 and 206, these examples all belonged to the later period of his career. In fact, three of them appear in works which were marked by Montanism. These are Anim. 55:5, 36-40, Fug. 7:2, 29-31 and 14:2, 19-14:3, 24.

I will go further and note that two of the five examples are to be found adjacent to a reference in the Paraclete and its teachings, that is, Anim. 55:5, 36-40 and Fug. 14:2, 19-14:3, 24.<sup>91</sup> Since Mart. displayed a marked reticence about the idea of "following" Jesus to martyrdom, it may be concluded from the distribution of the word "sequi" that it was an idea that Tertullian took time to assimilate. It may also be concluded from the distribution of the word "sequi" that it was an idea whose assimilation was hastened by his conversion to Montanism.

Then there is the fact that with the exception of Scorp. 15:4, 15-17, Tertullian's allusions to "following" Jesus unto death all took the form of Scriptural citations. Fug.

7:2, 30-31, with its stark pronouncement that "qui non tollit crucem suam et sequitur me, non potest meus esse discipulus", is a direct appropriation of Mt. 10:38 and 16:24. Fug. 14:2, 19-20, with its claim that "non quaeritur qui latam uiam sequi paratus sit, sed qui angustam", is direct appropriation of Mt. 7:13-14.

Indeed, almost without exception, Tertullian's seventeen discipleship-orientated applications of the word "sequi" are directly related to the text of the Bible. Marc. IV:9:2, 16-17, where he recounted the calling of Peter and the sons of Zebedee, drew its inspiration from Lk. 5:10-11 - "denique relictis nauclis secuti sunt eum". Marc. IV.36:4, 22-23, where he described Christ's summons to the rich young man, draws its inspiration from Lk. 18:22 - "omnia, quaecumque habes, uende et da pauperibus, et habebis thesaurum in caelo, et ueni, sequere me".

From this, it may perhaps be deduced that although Tertullian recognised that the call to "follow" the Christ lies at the heart of the Gospel message, he never acquired complete confidence in his application of that call within his moral theology. Throughout, it remained a Biblical concept to be quoted rather than an idea which had become part of his personal pattern of thought.

Nevertheless, despite these qualifications, the call to "follow" Christ had its impact on Tertullian's understanding of martyrdom. By its emphasis upon the historical Jesus - an emphasis reinforced by its dependence upon the words of

Jesus as recorded by the Bible - Tertullian's application of that call succeeded in making Jesus' demands on the individual Christian more immediate and more personal. It helped to ensure that the dominical invitation to discipleship was not restricted to first century Judaea, for it reminded his readers that that invitation rang out in all ages. By enlisting the motif of "following" the way of the cross, Tertullian transformed the third century martyr into the heir of the first itinerant disciples. By rendering the call to martyrdom immediate, Tertullian's thought is in the best spirit of the "imitatio Christi" motif; only a whole-hearted response to the summons of Christ is acceptable.

The call to "follow" Christ also increased the importance of Jesus as the religious Teacher within Tertullian's understanding of martyrdom. By so doing, it highlighted the ethical thrust of that understanding. For the author of Anim. 55:5, 36-40 and Fug. 9:4, 39-41, martyrdom was not simply a right way to die but the right way. The fact that both those passages cited a Montanist inspired oracle<sup>92</sup> should not obscure the fact that the right way to die is illustrated in Christ's cross. Anim. 55:5, 39 may have set the call to "follow" the cross alongside a rejection of people dying comfortably in their beds but the Montanist oracle merely confirmed the teaching of Jesus.

To understand the ethical input to martyr theology of the word "teacher", it is necessary to come to terms with the concept of a teacher which Tertullian inherited from both Judeo-Christian and classical culture. The New



Testament understanding of "following" a teacher entailed the complete merging of one's own fate with that of one's teacher; it assumed the sharing of his daily life, his aims and his destiny.<sup>93</sup> True discipleship found expression not merely in words but also in actions.

In coming to this view, Christianity had drawn upon a system of tuition which had prevailed in the ancient world - the system whereby the sage sought to convey his message as much by his actions as by his words.<sup>94</sup> This concept of tuition had also been vital for the handing down of the Jewish Law. As the "Rabbinic" tradition knew, the faithful pupil scrupulously marked and reproduced the language and behaviour of his teacher.<sup>95</sup>

W.H.C. Frend and C. Aziza believe that, at Carthage, there were close contacts between Judaism and Christianity. They believe that these contacts showed themselves in the Christian community's maintenance of "kosher" practice and in their scholars tendency to employ markedly similar arguments in favour of moral rigourism and in opposition to idolatry.<sup>96</sup>

In such an atmosphere of mutual contact - albeit, bad tempered contact, if Scorp. 10:9, 9-10:10,15 is to be believed - Tertullian may well have been familiar with the Rabbinic methods of perpetuating the faith.

The tradition of the classical sage also left its mark on his thought. Discussing his panegyric upon patience - a



panegyric which owed much to its Stoic prototypes<sup>97</sup> - Fredouille concludes that the picture of our Lord depicted by Tertullian in Pat. 3:2, 4-3:9, 34 is, by and large, a practical lesson in ethics, a lesson which is merely a Christianised version of the exemplary lives which held pride of place in classical philosophy.

"Conçue comme un récit commenté de la vie du Christ, cette évocation reste encore proche des vies exemplaires qui occupent une place si importante dans les traités de morale."<sup>98</sup>

His reading of philosophy had confirmed Tertullian in his Biblically inspired belief that a man's actions convey a message to future generations.

Poverty, hardship, suffering and death were an integral part of the experience of the man Christ Jesus.<sup>99</sup> If discipleship means sharing that experience, it is only to be expected that a faithful response to the call to "follow" our Lord will involve the same trials.<sup>100</sup> That this was indeed the conclusion which Tertullian arrived at can be seen from Orat. 4:2, 8-9 and 4:3, 13-18:

"Quid autem deus uult quam incedere nos secundum suam disciplinam? ... Est et illa dei uoluntas, quam dominus administravit praedicando, operando, sustinendo. Si enim ipse pronuntiavit non suam, sed patris facere se uoluntatem, sine dubio, quae faciebat, ea erat uoluntas patris, ad quae nunc nos uelut ad exemplaria prouocamur, ut et praedicemus et operemur et sustineamus ad mortem usque".

In that passage, the Christian was urged to "walk" according to the discipline and to copy the "models" laid down by Christ. The "disciplina" to which the Christian was called to adhere, in Orat. 4:2, 9 is (according to Braun) "celui de

'regie de vie'."101 Whilst Braun is right when he emphasises that Tertullian was indebted to the Roman concepts of "disciplina publica" and "disciplina militaris" for his understanding of the word "disciplina",102 the focus in Orat. 4:2, 8-9 and 4:3, 13-18 is upon the Teacher and His example.

Now, as was demonstrated earlier in such extracts as Cor. 14:3, 14-14:4, 32 and Pat. 3:1, 1-3:10, 37, the example of the supreme Teacher, Jesus of Nazareth, was an example of humility and suffering, an example of obedience and death. To quote Pétré:

"La souffrance est chose essentielle dans la vie du Christ: 'Ce qui montre que nous sommes chrétiens, c'est ce que nous souffrons à l'exemple du Christ même'. Quand son heure fut venue, il ne se déroba pas à la persécution, refusant toute défense humaine et même tout secours divin extraordinaire. La prière qu'il adressa alors à son père est pour nous exemplaire: 'Il demanda lui-même à son père, si c'était possible, que le calice de sa passion passe loin de lui. Demandez-le, vous aussi, mais restant fermes comme lui, mais demandant seulement, mais ajoutant aussi la suite: 'Mais non pas ce que je veux, mais ce que vous voulez.'" Le disciple peut-il souhaiter être traité autrement que le maître: 'Puisque le maître et seigneur a souffert lui-même persécution, trahison, mise à mort, combien plus les serviteurs et disciples devront-ils eux aussi subir les mêmes peines!"103

Well might Apol. 45:1, 3 proclaim that Christ is the "perfect Teacher"!

As a result of its author's appropriate of the pupil/teacher resonance inherent within the call to "follow" Jesus, martyrdom (like the discipleship of which it is the culmination) became a question not merely of an active decision in favour of righteousness but also of an active

decision in favour of an individual. The call to "follow" Christ, also assumes that the individual who responds to the call loves his Teacher and adheres voluntarily to His teaching. By adopting the idea<sup>104</sup> that the martyr is called to take up his cross and "follow" Jesus, Tertullian introduced a valuable element of unconstrained decision into his theory of martyrdom. By stressing the fact that the martyr is given a summons, he implied that the martyr has it in his power to accept or reject that summons, that is, that he has an alternative to martyrdom. This was a valuable corrective to the atmosphere of compulsion which underlay his discussions of the Christian's duty as the slave of the Deity. Thus, martyrdom as the culmination of the call to discipleship stands unequivocally in the best tradition of the "imitatio Christi" motif.

The Tertullianic version of martyrdom as the culmination of the call to discipleship is, however, flawed in one respect, that is in its failure to incorporate the message of I Cor. 15:49 into its teaching. This failure is extremely regrettable because the vision of Christ implicit within Resurr. 49:6, 27-49:7, 34, Christ the supreme example of life and morals, would have served as an invaluable reminder to the Christian that he was obliged to conform his life to that of his Saviour, even if such a conformation led to his death. To quote Tertullian:

"Sicut portauimus imaginem choici, portemus etiam imaginem supercaelestis'. Portauimus enim eam imaginem choici per collegium transgressionis, per consortium mortis, per exilium paradisi. Nam et si in carne hic portatur imago Adae, sed non carnem monemur exponere: si non carnem, ergo conuersationem, ut proinde et caelestis imaginem

gestemus in nobis, non iam dei nec iam in caelo constituti, sed secundum liniamenta Christi incedentes in sanctitate et iustitia et ueritate".

His failure to exploit the potential of the idea of replacing the "image" of the "choic man" with that of the "Heavenly Man" leaves a further question-mark against the depth of his attachment to the "imitatio Christi" theme.

2.3.6      The martyr: was he the heir of Stephen or the heir of Christ?

"Quod Petrus caeditur, quod Stephanus opprimitur, quod Iacobus immolatur, quod Paulus distrahitur, ipsorum sanguine scripta sunt ... Haec ubicumque iam legero, pati disco; nec mea interest, quos sequar martyrii magistros, sensusne an exitus apostolorum, nisi quod et sensus in exitibus recognosco."

Here, in Scorp. 15:2, 7-9 and 15:4, 15-17, Tertullian glorified the martyrdoms of the apostles and deacons. Indeed, he did not merely set them before the faithful as men who had imitated their Master even to the point of death; he placed them before the faithful as men who ought to be imitated in their own right. To focus specifically upon the case of the first martyr, Tertullian presented the motif of Stephen in such a way as to advocate the "imitation" of Stephen himself. This was the clear message of Pat. 14:1, 2-3,<sup>105</sup> set as it is amid a series of examples of patience to which the Christian is urged to respond (Pat. 14:1, 1-14:7, 28).

Discussing the place of the apostles in Tertullian's theology of martyrdom, Pétré observes:

"Pierre mis à mort, Étienne lapidé, Jacques immolé, Paul torturé, l'histoire des apôtres 'est écrite avec leur propre sang'. Pour exprimer la force de pareils exemples, Tertullien trouve une belle formule: 'Toutes les fois que je lis ces récits, j'apprends à souffrir', 'haec ubicumque iam legero, pati disco'. Leur souffrance et leur mort font des apôtres les 'martyrii magistri'."106

Scorp. 15:2, 7-9 could be dismissed simply as a Christianised version of the exemplary lives of classical philosophy (a tradition with which Tertullian was familiar, as the quote from Fredouille cited earlier illustrates). This would, however, be a mistake.

To attempt to excuse Tertullian, on the grounds that the Biblical account of the death of Stephen was itself the product of a vibrant "imitatio Christi" tradition,<sup>107</sup> is also an inadequate explanation. Although he was acquainted with Acts 7 : 51-60, there is no evidence that he was interested in the parallels which the author of Luke-Acts drew between the death of Stephen and that of his Master.

Both men had been cast out of the city to die beyond the walls of Jerusalem, both had petitioned God to forgive their persecutors and both had asked the Father to receive their spirit.<sup>108</sup> It is exceedingly unlikely that Tertullian was ignorant of these analogies between the death of Stephen and that of Christ. Yet, in his mind, the two noteworthy facts about Stephen's martyrdom are that he was put to death by stoning and that his vision of Christ seated in Glory upholds the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>109</sup> Tertullian may indeed have recognised that before his death, Stephen prayed for his enemies<sup>110</sup> but this does little to

demonstrate that he exploited the parallels drawn by Luke-Acts between the death of Stephen and that of Jesus and thus to demonstrate that he envisaged Stephen as following in the footsteps of his Lord. Although he cited Lk. 23:34, he failed to mention the corresponding prayer of Christ from the cross.

At the very least, Tertullian's failure to exploit the analogies of Luke-Acts is an indication that imitating the Passion was not to the forefront of his theology of martyrdom. Indeed, I would go further. His readiness to glorify in their own right, the deaths of the prophets,<sup>111</sup> apostles and deacons suggests that the desire to imitate Christ played a subordinate role in his exhortations. Christ was forced to share the stage with His servants - with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Stephen, Peter and Paul. As a result, Tertullian diverted attention from the distinctive characters of Christ's example - something a strict devotee of "imitatio Christi" would have been reluctant to do.

#### 2.3.7 The Biblical foundations of the Tertullianic "imitatio Christi" theme

Dependent as it is upon the life and death of the historical Jesus, it would be reasonable for any theology which emphasises the imitation of Christ to ground itself thoroughly in the words of the Bible. So, how far was this true of Tertullian's teaching on martyrdom?



At the strictest level of the vocabulary of "imitation", the answer must be a straightforward negative. Those Biblical verses which refer to the "imitation" of Christ find no place in his reflections on martyrdom; indeed, they failed to form a part of his teaching on discipleship (in the wider sense of that word).<sup>112</sup> Even Uxor. II.2:4, 37-38, with its allusion to "qui nos ad exemplum sui hortatur", was concerned with the "imitation" of Paul rather than the "imitation" of Christ.<sup>113</sup>

At the broader level of discipleship, the answer must be in the affirmative. Primarily, Tertullian based his understanding upon those Biblical texts where Jesus had taught the meaning of true service. As a result, Mt. 10:24-25 and Mt. 6:24 were central to his argument:

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master; it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master"  
(Mt. 10:24-25)

and

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."  
(Mt. 6:24)

Thus, in Scorp. 9:6, 21-27, Tertullian regarded the anguish which befalls the man who steadfastly "confesses" the Lord as the inevitable outcome of the Christian's duty to accept the same fate as his Master. Similarly, in Cor. 1:1, 4-7 and Fug. 12:6, 59-62, he regarded the Christian's obligation to confront martyrdom as the inevitable outcome of his



inability truly to serve Christ if he continues to submit to the suzerainty of the Devil.

He also found pointers to the meaning of true service in such verses as Mt. 10:37-39. Human loves and loyalties must be subordinated to the claims of the Gospel and its Lord - this was the lesson which the author of Cor. 11:1, 4-9 had imbibed.

Nevertheless, he found no role for a text like Mt. 24:45-46.<sup>114</sup> Hence, surprisingly, Tertullian did not depict the martyr as the steward who had been found attentively in his place at the coming of his Master.

The culmination of true service is, according to the Bible, the Christian's participation in the anguish and agony of the cross. To quote Mt. 16:24-25:

"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will find it.'"

Tertullian exploited the Bible's teaching on this issue to the full.<sup>115</sup>

By contrast, however, he quoted 2 Cor. 4:8-10 only once within the context of martyrdom (that is, in Scorp. 13:7, 27-13:7, 1) and failed to so quote Rev. 14:4 at all. Perhaps he found the idea of the Christian "carrying" the death of Jesus in his body too abstract an idea. This, together with the fact that Resurr. 27:1, 3-5 expounded the need to "follow" the "Lamb" wherever He "goes" in terms of

chastity rather than martyrdom, suggests that the Biblical grounds for Tertullian's theory of martyrdom as following in the footsteps of Christ were relatively narrow. First and foremost, it was a Matthean-based concept.

Even I Pet 2:21 with its reference to the example of suffering set by Christ and I Pet. 4:12 with its reference to the Christian sharing in Christ's sufferings, appear once only, in Scorp. 12:2, 12-12:3, 22. As for Rev. 7:14 (where the martyrs wash themselves in the blood of the Lamb) there is but a single instance too, that is, in Scorp. 12:10, 1-5.<sup>116</sup>

If the verses which demonstrate the meaning of the true service are the ones which principally held Tertullian's attention, there are other verses which contributed to the necessary climate of opinion - the climate in which a Christocentric approach to martyrdom could develop. Tertullian reiterated the call of Jesus to the original inhabitants of first century Palestine - the call encapsulated in such texts as Mt. 4:19-22, 10:38, 19:21, Mk. 2:14-15, 8:34, 10:28-30, Lk. 18:22 and Jn. 8:12.<sup>117</sup> He expounded such Christocentric expositions of baptism as Rom. 6:3-6, Gal. 3:27 and Col. 2:12-13.<sup>118</sup> He employed such descriptions of the qualities of God the Father and His Incarnate Son as Mt. 5:43-45, Phil. 2:5-8, Phil. 3:7-11, I Pet. 1:14-16, and I Jn. 1:5-7.<sup>119</sup>

However, there is a distinction between creating the climate of opinion for an idea and providing the authority for it.

With the exception of Mt. 10:38, Mk. 8:34 and 10:28-30, where the call to "follow" Jesus of Nazareth is directly associated with persecution and Gal. 3:27 where the nature of baptism makes apostasy criminal, none of the texts enumerated in the foregoing paragraph provided concrete authority for Tertullian's theory of martyrdom.

That Tertullian's theory had clear Biblical foundations is indisputable. The fact that a theme such as "following" Jesus to the cross is always expressed in the guise of Biblical citations reinforces this impression. Nevertheless, the fact that in two key expositions of that theory - that is, Resurr. 8:5, 24-8:6, 30 and Pat. 16:5, 15-18 - he felt able to omit any reference to the Sacred text must leave a question-mark over the depth and stability of those foundations. The man who could so neglect the Sacred text was either excessively confident about his topic or the reverse. The evidence of this chapter might suggest that in the case of Tertullian the latter was true.

To sum up, death as the imitation of the Master played a subordinate role in Tertullian's understanding of death. To appreciate this fully, it is helpful to compare his descriptions of martyrdom with those of contemporary texts where the "imitatio Christi" motif was very much to the fore.<sup>120</sup> Of the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, Frend had declared:

"Behind their action lies the whole theology of martyrdom in the early Church. They were seeking by their death to attain to the closest possible

imitation of Christ's Passion and death. This was the heart of their attitude."<sup>121</sup>

Applied to Tertullian's theology, this statement would be a gross exaggeration. The martyr may have followed Christ unto death but in his eyes, this was not the principal inspiration for and purpose of the martyr's death. Tertullian always gave ascendancy in his exposition of the martyr's death to questions of eschatology, demonology and sacrificial ideology.

Subordination should not, however, be mistaken for irrelevance. Defining genuine "imitatio Christi", Fredouille has stated that it is characterised by an almost mystic participation in the life of Christ Himself and an identification with Christ as the Source of Grace. To quote, the imitation of Christ:

"Implique beaucoup plus qu'un parallélisme des vies: un élan d'union, d'identification au Christ avec le secours de la grâce; plus qu'une imitation à proprement parler, au sens moral, une véritable participation mystique à la vie même du Christ".<sup>122</sup>

Pérté too has doubts about Tertullian's use of the "example" of Christ - regarding that use as overly disputacious, concerned as it frequently was to win an argument rather than to inspire men and women to adopt new lives.<sup>123</sup>

It is certainly true that Tertullian's expositions of martyrdom were frequently imbued with a polemical ring. It was, however, polemic which was designed to win over men's minds as a prelude to winning them over to a new life.

As for Fredouille's criteria, by them the Tertullianic "imitatio Christi" motif would have failed in its entirety. Contrary to what Fredouille has concluded, Tertullian's statement in Pud. 22:6, 30 that Christ "is in the martyr" was not an affirmation of his own belief but a hypothesis which he subsequently proceeded to demolish.<sup>124</sup> Moreover, his statement that the Christian should lay down his life for Christ because He laid down His for him may indeed demonstrate an awareness of Christ as the Source of Grace but it does not assume a state of union.<sup>125</sup> Rather, the essential thrust of that passage is that of a quid pro quo.

It is true that Tertullian's reflections lack the mystical undercurrent and the poetic quality of his medieval successors. It is, however, hardly fair to condemn Tertullian for his lack of mystical awareness; such awareness is a secondary characteristic of the theme of imitating our Lord, not a primary one. The vision accorded to the martyrs in the amphitheatre at Lyons was a consequence of their conscious attempt to mould their lives on that of Christ; it was not the inevitable prerequisite of such a moulding.

The crucial hallmarks of the "imitatio Christi" motif (the hallmarks highlighted in the introduction to this chapter) were present - albeit in a modified form - in the works of Tertullian. The Christian who obediently seeks to fulfil his commitments as a slave of the Divine and to accommodate his life to the standards personified by his Master has indeed responded sincerely to the call of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Christian who is deeply conscious of his indebtedness to his Saviour for His sacrifice at Calvary is indeed preoccupied by the torments endured by that Saviour. By choosing to walk the identical path and to accept similar anguish for himself, the Christian has indeed subordinated his own desires and overpowered his self-love.

Because they stress the obedience which the Christian owes his Master, Tertullian's expositions of the "imitatio Christi" theme sometimes give the impression that imitating Christ's death is less important than obeying His words.<sup>126</sup> However, this impression was probably unintentional and, at any rate, was not sufficient to place his thought outwith the bounds of the aforesaid tradition. The same is true (albeit with qualifications) of the spirit of harshness which pervades the theory in which martyrdom is the duty of the slave and the debt of the disciple.

In the words of Jn. 14:6, Christ is the "Way", the "Truth" and the "Life" - His life and death marks out for His brethren the "way" of true righteousness, the "truth" of true selflessness and the "life" of true humanity. Yet, it is indicative of Tertullian's ambivalent response to the "imitatio Christi" theme that in those extracts where he discussed Jn. 14:6, his gaze was directed towards Christ as the embodiment of Truth rather than upon Christ as the Guide to the Christian way. Thus, Prax, 24:1, 1-6 employed the text to prove that the Incarnate Son is consubstantial with the Father, whilst Marc. III. 11:9, 26-32 utilised it to demonstrate that He who was the embodiment of Truth could

not have lived a lie, that is, the lie of having bogus flesh. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" - a valuable text for any theory of imitating the Saviour, Tertullian failed to appreciate its potential. It is a serviceable warning not to overstate the role of the "imitatio Christi" motif in Tertullian's understanding of death.



## References : Chapter 2

1. Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution, pp.14-15 and 17.
2. "And in this sodaynlye I sawe the rede blode trekyllle downe fro vndyr the garlande alle hate, frescheye, plentefully, and lyvelye, ryght as me thought that it was in that tyme that the garlonde of thornys was thyrstede on his blessedde heede. Ryght so both god and man the same sufferde for me." (Shew. 3:7-11).  
"Aftyр this cryste schewyd me a partye of his passyone nere his dyinge. I sawe that swete faace as yt ware drye and bludyelesse with pale dyinge, sithen mare dede pale langourande; and than turnede more dede to the blewe, and sithene mare blewe as the flesche turnede mare deepe dede." (Shew. 10:17-21).
3. "Ecce in cruce totum iacet, et non est alia uia ad uitam et ad ueram internam pacem, nisi uia sanctae crucis et quotidianae mortificationis." (Thomas à Kempis, Imit. II 12:3, 33-36).
4. E.J. Tinsley, The Imitation of God in Christ, London, 1960, p.102 - "Jesus was summoning His disciples to walk in the same 'Way' to which he had committed himself, only they were to do it by allowing the form of his life and mission to be reproduced in theirs".
5. Thomas à Kempis, Imit. I. 1:1, 3-4.
6. See note 3.
7. Tinsley, Imitation, p.178 - "The concept of the imitation of Christ also focuses attention on the reality of the Incarnation, and takes the consequences of that great fact with the utmost seriousness".
8. "Bonum agonem subituri estis in quo agonothetes deus uiuus est, xystarches spiritus sanctus, corona aeternitatis, brabium angelicae substantiae, politia in caelis, gloria in saecula saeculorum".
9. Mart. 1:3, 12-15, 1:4, 17-20 and 2:5, 15-16.
10. "Cum magister et dominus ipse perpessus sit persecutionem et traditionem et occisionem, multo magis serui et discipuli eadem expendere debebunt". (Scorp. 9:6, 23-25).  
"Oportet enim, quomodo Christus animam suam posuit pro nobis, ita fieri pro eo et a nobis". (Fug. 12:7, 76-77).
11. Fredouille, Tertullien, pp. 404-406.
12. H. Pétré, L'Exemplum chez Tertullien, Dijon, 1940, pp.140-141 and 147.
13. Bapt. 18:5, 30-31, where Tertullian declared that children should not be baptised until they were competent to learn the meaning of Christianity, provides an indirect allusion to the role of the catechumenate.
14. Fredouille, Tertullien, p.410.
15. Fredouille, Tertullien, p.409.
16. Pétré, L'Exemplum chez Tertullien, pp.71-80 and R. Braun, "Sur la Date, la Composition et le Texte de l'Ad Martyras de Tertuillien", Rev. Ét. Aug., 24, 1978, pp.224-231.
17. Pétré, L'Exemplum chez Tertullien, pp.67-71.
18. "A diabolo scilicet, cuius sunt partes interuertendi ueritatem qui ipsas quoque res sacramentorum diuinorum idolorum mysteriis aemulatur. Tingit et ipse quosdam

utique credentes et fideles suos; expositionem delictorum de lauacro repromittit; et, si adhuc memini Mithrae, signat illic in frontibus milites suos. Celebrat et panis oblationem et imaginem resurrectionis inducit et sub gladio redimit coronam. Quid, quod et summum pontificem in unis nuptiis statuit? Habet et uirgines, habet et continentes. Ceterum si Numae Pompilii superstitiones reuoluamus, si sacerdotalia officia et insignia et priuilegia, si sacrificantium ministeria et instrumenta et uasa, si ipsorum sacrificiorum ac piaculorum et uotorum curiositates consideremus, nonne manifeste diabolus morositatem illam Iudaicae legis imitatus est?" (Praes. 40:2, 2-40:6, 16).

19. Index Tertullianus, pp.1479-1480.
20. M. Leglay, Saturn Africain Histoire, Paris, 1966, pp.481-482 and 485-487.  
"Berbéro-punique dans son élaboration, capté sur place par un dieu romain déschu, mais sans transformation de sa nature, Saturn est donc resté, malgré les efforts de Rome, un dieu spécifiquement africain". (Leglay, Saturn Africain Histoire, p.481).
21. Leglay, Saturn Africain Histoire, p.124.
22. Leglay, Saturn Africain Histoire, p. 125 - "Il souligne l'omnipotence et la souveraineté absolues de dieu, aux yeux des Africains".
23. "Sanguinem hominis deus concupiscit? Et tamen ausim dicere, si et homo regnum dei, si et homo certam salutem, si et homo secundam regenerationem". (Scorp. 6:11, 19-21).
24. "Et exiuit uir quidam mirae magnitudinis ut etiam excederet fastigium amphitheatri, discinctatus, purpuram inter duos clauos per medium pectus habens, et galliculas multiformes ex auro et argento factas, et ferens uirgam quasi lanista, et ramum uiridem in quo erant mala aurea".
25. For the approximate dating of Pass. Mar. et Iac. and Pass. Mont. et Luc. see H. Musurillo, The Acts of the Christian Martyrs, Oxford, 1972, pp. xxxiii-xxxvi.
26. Pass. Perp. 10:8, 7-10:9, 13 and Pass. Mar. et Iac. 7:3, 31-7:4, 3.
27. Thomas à Kempis, Imit. I.1:1, 3-4, ("quatenus uitam eius et mores imitemur") and III.56:3, 32-34 ("domine Iesu, quia arcta erat uita tua et mundo despecta, dona mihi tecum mundi despectum imitari").
28. Index Tertullianus, p.730.
29. "Si enim ipse pronuntiauit non suam, sed patris facere se uoluntatem, sine dubio, quae faciebat, ea erat uoluntas patris, ad quae nunc nos ueut ad exemplaria prouocamur, ut et praedicemus et operemur et sustineamus ad mortem usque". (Orat. 4:3, 14-18).  
"Quale est, ut et ipse super cathedram suam collocaret qui sanctitatem carnis praecipere magis non etiam obire meminissent, quam illis omnibus modis insinuarat et docendam et agendam? In primis de suo exemplo". (Monog. 8:7, 41-45).
30. W.P. de Boer, The Imitation of Paul, Kamen, 1962, pp.17-19 and 24-29.
31. The message of Scorp. 1:6, 14-1:12, 21 is that the martyr's death has value and that of Ieiun. 12:3, 27-

- 12:3, 9 is that genuine martyrdom entails sincere commitment on the part of the subject.
32. Pétré, L'Exemplum chez Tertullien, pp.13-21 and 143-145.
  33. Pétré, L'Exemplum chez Tertullien, pp.144-145.
  34. R.C. Tannehill, Dying and Rising with Christ, Berlin, 1967, pp.7-74.
  35. "An ignoratis, quod, qui tincti sumus in Christo, in mortem eius sumus tincti? Consepulti ergo illi sumus per baptismum in mortem, ut, sicut Christus resurrexit a mortuis, ita et nos in nouitate uitae incedamus. Si enim consepulti sumus simulacro mortis eius, sed et resurrectionis erimus, hoc scientes quod uetus homo noster confixus est illi'." (Pud. 17:5, 16-17:6, 22).
  36. "Taceo quod figitur, in hoc enim uenerat (Christ): numquid tamen subiendae morti etiam contumeliis opus fuerat? Sed saginari patientiae uoluptate discessurus uolebat: despuatur uerberatur deridetur, foedis uestitur, foedioribus coronatur." (Pat. 3:9, 30-34).
  37. The expiatory character of Christ's sacrifice was to the fore in Marc. III. 7:7, 7 and Iud. 14:9, 68. Christ's desire to conform His will to that of His Father (Fug. 8:3, 17-21) suggests that that sacrifice was also an expression of His love for the Father.
  38. Pat. 16:5, 15-18; and Scorp. 6:9, 9-6:11, 18, respectively.
  39. Examples include "debitum" - Resurr. 8:6, 29; "debere" - Cor. 14:4, 31 and Resurr. 8:6, 29 and "rependere" - Cor. 14:4, 31 and Pat. 16:5, 16.
  40. Scorp. 6:1, 3-9, 9:8, 11-9:10, 8, Marc. II. 10:6, 3-9, Fug. 1:3, 22-1:6, 46 and Pat. 16:5, 15-17.
  41. Pud. 22:4, 22-22:5, 28.
  42. "Ac ne hoc dictum in licentiam fornicationis inuaderes, ut in rem tuam, non domini delicturus, aufert te tibi, et Christo, sicut disposuerat, addicit: 'et non estis uestri', statim apponens: 'empti enim estis pretio', sanguine scilicet domini; 'glorificate et tollite deum in corpore uestro'.
  43. Fredouille, Pat. p.71 and C. Munier, Tertullien : A son Épouse, Paris, 1980, p.149.
  44. T.E.J. Wiedemann, Greek and Roman Slavery, London, 1981, pp.5-6 and T.E.J. Wiedemann, Slavery, Oxford, 1987, pp.12-13.
  45. Wiedemann, Greek and Roman Slavery, p.5.
  46. Braun, Deus Christianorum, p.424.
  47. Idol. 18:4, 8-10.
  48. Idol. 18:1, 7-18:4, 10.
  49. "dominus" - Idol. 18:5, 13; and "seruus" - Idol. 18:5, 11.
  50. Waszink and Van Winden, Idol., p. 262.
  51. W.W. Buckland, The Roman Law of Slavery : the Condition of the Slave in Private Law from Augustus to Justinian, Cambridge, 1908, p.680.
  52. Buckland, The Roman Law of Slavery, p.10.
  53. Buckland, The Roman Law of Slavery, pp.239, 434 and 716, Wiedemann, Greek and Roman Slavery, p. 2 and Wiedemann, Slavery, pp.22-23.
  54. Buckland, The Roman Law of Slavery, pp. 29, 79 and 82, Wiedemann, Greek and Roman Slavery, pp.10 and 175 and Wiedemann, Slavery, p.23.

55. Buckland, The Roman Law of Slavery, pp.37-38, Wiedemann, Greek and Roman Slavery, pp. 10 and 173 and Wiedemann, Slavery, p.24.
56. Buckland, The Roman Law of Slavery, p.31.
57. Cor. 1:1, 4-7, Fug. 12:6, 59-62, Spect. 26:4, 10-13, Uxor. II. 3:4, 23-24 and Idol. 19:2, 14-17.
58. Scorp. 9:1, 10-9:13, 28 and Fug. 7:1, 9-7:2, 34.
59. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp. 253 and 252, respectively.
60. ibid, pp. 251 and 254.
61. Fug. 7:1, 1-7:2, 34, Scorp. 9:1, 10-9:13, 28, 10:9, 9-10:17, 31 and 11:1, 5-11:8, 4. These extracts display a heavy dependence on Mt. 10:16-39.
62. Wiedemann, Slavery, p.22.
63. Fug. 12:3, 28-31 and Paen. 5:7, 23-5:8, 32.
64. Xenophon, Oik., 12 - see Wiedemann, Greek and Roman Slavery, p.61.
65. Prax. 21:17, 78-87 and 24:4, 28-24:8, 60.
66. Pat. 16:5, 15-18.
67. "Nondum inimicos suos Christus obpressit, ut cum amicis de inimicis triumphet".
68. Braun, Deus Christianorum, p.500.
69. Buckland, The Roman Law of Slavery, p.438.
70. Idol. 5:4, 9-13, Iud. 10:10, 66-82 and Marc. III. 18:6, 14-18:7, 27.
71. "A complex situation arises where a man has redeemed a captive, by paying a ransom. The general rule applied here is that the ransomer has a lien on the redeemed captive, and 'postliminium' with its various results is postponed till the lien is ended" (Buckland, The Roman Law of Slavery, p.311).  
See also Buckland, The Roman Law of Slavery, pp.311-317.
72. A.J. Duff, Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire, Cambridge, 1958, pp.36-48, Wiedemann, Greek and Roman Slavery, pp.304 and 55-56 and Wiedemann, Slavery, p.28.
73. Wiedemann, Slavery, p.28.
74. Orat. 9:2, 4-8 and Uxor. II. 8:7, 41-8:9, 57.
75. Fredouille, Pat., p.142.
76. For examples of the differing views regarding the extent of Tertullian's legal knowledge see Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution, p.366 and Barnes, Tertullian, pp.22-29 and 151-152.
77. See note 19.
78. "seruus" - Cor. 13:5, 30, Cult. II. 2:3, 22, Idol. 14:3, 2, 18:5, 11, Paen. 7:1, 2, 7:8, 29, Pat. 8:1, 3, 8:3, 15, 11:4, 15, 15:3, 12 and Scorp. 9:6, 22 and 24.
79. Daniélou, Origins, pp.363-366 and Braun, Deus Christianorum, pp.188-194 and 227-242.
80. Prax. 4:1, 1-4:4, 26, 16:1, 1-16:2, 14 and Fug. 2:5, 41-44.
81. Herm. 3:5, 10-3:7, 25.  
See Braun, Deus Christianorum, p.96.
82. Braun, Deus Christianorum, pp.97 and 111, respectively.
83. Prax. 4:1, 1-4:3, 22 and 17:1, 1-17:3, 19.
84. See note 69.
85. Prax. 20:1, 4-8 and 24:1, 1-24:8, 63.
86. Scorp. 2:2, 10-2:14, 21, 7:7, 7-11 and Pud. 2:4, 17-2:8, 34.
87. Scorp. 9:6, 21-27, Anim. 55:5, 36-40 and Fug. 7:2, 29-34.



88. Anim. 55:5, 38-39 and Fug. 9:4, 39-41.
89. "sequi" - Anim. 55:5, 39, Bapt. 12:5, 29, 12:8, 50, Fug. 7:2, 31, 14:2, 19, Idol. 12:2, 14, Marc. 9:2, 16, IV. 23:3, 8, IV. 23:9, 2, IV. 36:4, 23, IV. 36:6, 12, IV. 36:7, 17, V. 18:11, 25, Prax. 13:2, 9, Scap. 5:4, 26 and Scorp. 15:4, 16.
90. "sequi" - Anim. 55:5, 39, Fug. 7:2, 31, 14:2, 19, Idol. 12:2, 14 and Scorp. 15:4, 16.
91. "Non quaeritur qui latam uiam sequi paratus sit, sed qui angustam. Et ideo paracletus necessarius". (Fug. 14:2, 19-14:3, 20).  
"Agnosce itaque differentiam ethnici et fidelis in morte, si pro deo occumbas, ut paracletus monet, non in mollibus febribus et in lectulis, sed in martyriis, si crucem tuam tollas et sequaris dominum". (Anim. 55:5, 36-39).
92. Anim. 55:5, 38 and Fug. 9:4, 39-40.  
See D.E. Aune, Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World, Michigan, 1983, pp.313-316.
93. Tinsley, Imitation, pp.100-104, De Boer, Imitation, pp.52-57 and P.N. Hillyer, "The Imitatio Christi in the Spirituality of Charles de Foucauld", Ph.D. Thesis, Edinburgh, 1979, pp.78-80.
94. Plato, Phaid. 57E/67A.  
See De Boer, Imitation, 9.24-28.
95. De Boer, Imitation, pp.43-44 and Hillyer, "The Imitatio Christi in the Spirituality of Charles de Foucauld", p.78.
96. C. Aziza, Tertullien et le Judaïsme, Paris, 1977, pp.23, 177-189, 194 and 200-209 and Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution, p.374.
97. Fredouille, Tertullien, pp.379-389.
98. Fredouille, Tertullien, pp.400-401.
99. Pat. 3:3, 8-3:6, 20, 3:9, 30-34, Idol. 18:5, 13-18:6, 22, Marc. III.7:7, 26-7:7, 6, III.7:8, 11-13 and Iud. 14:8, 49-14:9, 67.
100. Scorp. 9:6, 21-27.
101. Braun, Deus Christianorum, p.424.
102. Braun, Deus Christianorum, p.424.
103. Pétré, L'Exemplum chez Tertullien, pp.138-139.
104. Fug. 7:2, 24-7:2, 34 and Anim. 55:5, 36-40.
105. "Lapidatur Stephanus et ueniam hostibus suis postulat".
106. Pétré, L'Exemplum chez Tertullien, p.120.
107. That Acts 7:51-60 was the product of such a tradition - see Tinsley, Imitation, pp. 109-110 and De Boer, Imitation, pp.65-66.
108. The key verses in the account of the death of Stephen were Acts 7:58, 7:60 and 7:59. They had their parallels in the description of the Passion given by Lk. 23:33, 23:34 and 23:46.
109. Scorp. 15:2, 8 and Pat. 14:1, 2; and Prax. 30:5, 20-23, respectively.
110. Pat. 14:1, 2-3.
111. Scorp. 8:3, 1-4.
112. I Cor. 11:1 and I Thess. 1:6.  
Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, Paris, 1975, pp.462 and 507.
113. Uxor. II.2:4, 36-40.
114. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, p. 282.
115. *ibid*, pp.266 and 253, respectively.
116. *ibid*, pp. 253-254.

117. *ibid*, pp. 231, 253, 272, 296, 303, 307, 366 and 397, respectively.
118. *ibid*, pp. 433, 485 and 505, respectively.
119. *ibid*, pp. 239-240, 499-500, 501, 526 and 532, respectively.
120. Ignatius, Rhom. 6:3, 9-12 and Smur. 4:2, 8-12, Mart. Loug. 1:41, 14-20 and Origen Mart. Prot. 42:302, 4-11.
121. Friend, Martyrdom and Persecution, p.15.
122. Fredouille, Tertullien, p.401.
123. "Cette oeuvre, on ne saurait trop le redire, est plus d'un polémiste que d'un prédicateur. Dans un de ses derniers écrits montanistes, Tertullien nous montre adversaires et partisans du jeûne invoquant chacun en faveur de leur thèse l'exemple de Jésus: il mangeait et buvait, disent les uns, il a jeûné, répliquent les autres. Discussions vaines, argumentation stérile, vue bien extérieure de l'exemplaire divin: Tertullien était à ce moment trop loin du véritable esprit chrétien pour chercher une vraie lumière dans la contemplation de la vie, et surtout des sentiments du Christ."  
(Pétre, L'Exemplum chez Tertullien, pp.140-141.)
124. Pud. 22:6, 29-22:8, 41.  
See Fredouille, Tertullien, pp.401-402.
125. Fug. 12:7, 76-78.  
See Fredouille, Tertullien, pp.401-402.
126. There was a hint of this in Scorp. 9:1, 13-19 and Fug. 7:1, 2, 28, where the emphasis was on the verbal commands of Christ.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **DEATH AS A TEACHING MEDIUM**



### 3. DEATH AS A TEACHING MEDIUM

The dominical charge to preach the Gospel to all nations<sup>1</sup> has ensured that "teaching" occupies a prominent position within Christianity. The dominical command to die for the sake of that Gospel<sup>2</sup> has ensured that, within that Church, "bearing witness to" the Truth and relinquishing one's life for the sake of that Truth have frequently been one and the same thing. Evangelism is the enunciation of the Gospel in words; martyrdom is the enunciation of the Gospel in deeds. Within such an intellectual climate, the slightest nuance in a Christian's behaviour becomes suffused with significance.

In keeping with the etymology of the "μάρτυς" word-group,<sup>3</sup> scholars have, in their expositions of martyrdom,<sup>4</sup> tended to emphasise the martyr's function as "a witness" to the Faith. Characteristic of such expositions is H. Delehaye's exegesis of the title "martyr":

"Lorsque les apôtres et les contemporains du Sauveur ont disparu, le titre passe à ceux qui attestent la vérité du christianisme en donnant, dans des circonstances périlleuses, des preuves d'un attachement inébranlable à leur croyance. En un temps où ce témoignage entraîne fréquemment la mort, l'appellation finit par être réservée à ceux qui scellent de leur sang la confession de la foi."<sup>5</sup>

At first sight, Tertullian's theory of martyrdom appears to display a similar preoccupation with the martyr as "the witness" who testifies to unbelievers. His memorable aphorism that the "blood" of the Christians is the "seed" of the Church is, in itself, sufficient to encourage such an

interpretation. The power of Tertullian's oratory, however, should not impel the reader to adopt such a premature conclusion. His thought was not necessarily so consistent.

Then there is the contribution (positive or otherwise) of his understanding of ordinary death. If the death of the martyr testified to the character of his personal faith, might not the death of the ordinary Christian have done the same? If the idea of witnessing to the Faith was an important one within Tertullianic Christianity, might its author not have also believed that the ordinary Christian ought to consciously live his life so as to set his neighbours an example - an example of how to live and how to die? Yet, the evidence in Tertullian's works for endowing ordinary death with the power of testimony is, at best, extremely ambiguous.

I shall seek to demonstrate, in this chapter, that not only did Tertullian refrain from incorporating teaching on witness in his understanding of ordinary death, he did not accord it the central position in his exposition of martyrdom. In other words I would wish to qualify the traditional approach delineated above.

### 3.1 The "good" death

Dying well and teaching others how to die by the manner of one's own death are not necessarily the same thing. Read in isolation the "good" death does not logically demand that that death should be a lesson to those who behold it. Death

as a teaching medium is, however, not incompatible with the idea of dying well. From the proposition that there can be such a thing as a "good" death, it is only a short step to the conclusion that death sets an example. Virtue in one man is an invaluable tool for the moralist seeking to encourage virtue in his fellow men. So did Tertullian take that step?

According to Cult. II. 13:1, 4-13:2, 15, throughout his life, a Christian's actions testify to the Faith which he claims to profess. His good deeds shine forth as a witness to the goodness and the majesty of his Lord:

"Quid item nos dominus lucem mundi uocat? Quid ciuitati super montem constitutae comparauit, si non relucemus in tenebris et extamus inter demersos?"<sup>6</sup>

The actual word employed by Tertullian in Cult. II.13:1, 6-7 is "testimonium" - "uel ut malis et exemplo et testimonio sitis?"

Therefore, he might have been expected to describe the truly Christian death in the following terms. The Christian lies calmly on his sick bed, his heart devoid of fear or bitterness. He reflects upon a life in which he has attempted to serve his Master faithfully. When his final moment comes, he relaxes into the arms of his God. By his total calmness and unshakable faith in the face of death, the great destroyer, he sets an example to all men and women who behold him. This is a pattern which can later be found in the pastoral literature of the Reformation.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, for all his familiarity with Mt.5:16,<sup>8</sup> Tertullian never suggested that the faithful could learn how to face their own deaths by contemplating the deaths of the brethren who preceded them. What is more, apart from the deaths of the martyrs,<sup>9</sup> he never openly conceded that there was such a thing as a "good" death.

It is true that because he envisaged death as a mere brief departure or temporary separation (Pat. 9:2, 8-9:4, 17) Tertullian regarded sadness and impatience as inappropriate responses to the loss of a loved one. It is also true that he described the appropriate response of the Christian to the deaths of their loved ones as a response of "faith", "hope" and "equanimity".<sup>10</sup> However, to conclude that such a display of faith, hope and equanimity would have formed the cornerstone of any Tertullianic version of the "good" death, is to place great reliance upon a mere inference. If Tertullian applied his thoughts logically he must have concluded that sadness and impatience in the face of imminent death did indeed ill-befit the Christian - but it is impossible to be certain that he did employ the logic necessary to reach this conclusion.

A similar process of deduction could be applied to the analogy which he drew between sleep and death. Because the author of Anim. 43:10, 61-43:11, 75 and 43:12, 85-89 depicted death as falling asleep - a sleep which is a prelude to the re-awakening of the faithful at the resurrection - he might well have concluded that death should be approached without fear or trepidation. On his

own admission, sleep is both natural and rational - in the words of Anim. 43:7, 39-42 -

"porro somnum ratio praeit, tam aptum, tam utilem, tam necessarium, ut absque illo nulla anima sufficiat, recreatorem corporum, redintegratorem uirium, probatorem ualetudinum."

Thus, the analogy, if consistently employed, requires that death, too, is in accordance with reason. Just as sleep confers earthly refreshment upon man, so death is the gateway to the "refreshment" ("refrigerium") of eternity.<sup>11</sup> Just as bodily activity is regularly restored upon reawakening, so death is simply the gateway to the reawakening of the resurrection.

That Tertullian did indeed do so reason can be illustrated by Anim. 43:12, 85-86,

"ita cum euigilauerit corpus, redditum officiis eius resurrectionem mortuorum tibi affirmat".

Clearly, he regarded death as an inevitable component in the divine plan - an attitude which was in accordance with his view that it was the natural breakdown of the flesh's own processes which led to the separation of body and soul.<sup>12</sup> Thus, it would not be unreasonable to surmise that he would have rejected brooding upon the inevitable and that he would have enjoined the faithful not to fear such a transitory evil. It is, however, important to remember that he never stated so plainly.

Therefore, tantalising though these inferences are, they do not provide sufficient evidence to construct a Tertullianic theory of the "good" death. The lessons which can be drawn

from Tertullian's brief attempts to construct a Christianised "consolatio" for the bereaved are far too indirect.

Moreover, when he employed the word "testatio", in Anim. 43:11, 74, he applied it to the testimony which was given by sleep to the nature of death,<sup>13</sup> not to the testimony which might have been given to the onlookers by a dying man.

### 3.1.1 The contribution of classical "consolatio" for the bereaved.

Instead of discussing the "good" death, Tertullian discussed the proper attitude for the Christian to assume in the face of bereavement. By so doing, he replaced the testimony of the dying man with a third party's moralisation upon death.

Learning how to face up to the death of loved ones and learning from such deaths are quite distinct phenomena. Although writers like Seneca and Cicero cited prominent Roman's fortitude in the face of suffering in order to encourage the bereaved,<sup>14</sup> classical "consolatio" accorded a prominent role to philosophical reflection. Indeed, despite the importance of "exempla" in classical morality ("rhéteurs et juristes ne sont pas les seuls à utiliser l'exemple; les moralistes y ont souvent recours comme à une aide puissante pour entraîner la volonté vers le perfectionnement moral"<sup>15</sup>) I would go so far as to suggest that they played a subordinate role, albeit a significant one, in Stoic "consolatio" literature. Although Mart. 4:3, 20-4:8, 17,

Apol. 50:5, 21-50:9, 41 and Nat. I. 18:3, 25-18:11, 19 depict the deaths of such figures as M. Atilius Regulus and C. Mucius Scaevola as examples of martyrdom - the "good" death par excellence - Pat. 9:1, 1-9:5, 21 and Anim. 43:10, 61-43:12, 89 mirror this tendency to concentrate on reflection.

Nonetheless, despite the distinction between learning from death and learning to face up to death, a study of Tertullian's interaction with classical "consolatio" literature designed to uphold the bereaved is not without its relevance. In classical thought, consolation for the deaths of loved ones was bound up with consolation designed to strengthen the recipient in the face of his own death. As a comparison of Seneca's works reveals<sup>16</sup> classical authors transposed many of their arguments directly from one sphere to the other. If it can be proved that Tertullian was acquainted with some of the traditional arguments of classical "consolatio", his failure to teach the ordinary Christian how to approach death will be all the more startling.

Pat. 9:3, 10-13 describes death as a temporary departure from this life:

"Cur inpatienter feras subductum interim quem credis reuersurum? Profectio est quam putas mortem. Non est lugendus qui antecedit sed plane desiderandus".

Pat. 9:3, 9-10 reminds its readers that the dead have not perished - "cur enim doleas si perisse non credis?" Pat.



9:3, 13-14 asserts that the living will themselves soon make the same journey which the dead have taken:

"Id quoque desiderium patientia temperandum: cur enim inmoderate feras abisse quem mox subsequeris?"

A perusal of the classical consolation literature reveals that Tertullian was not alone in advocating such themes. Seneca, in Ad. Marc. Consol. 19:1, declared that the dead were merely absent on a journey -

"iudicemus illos abesse et nosmet ipsi fallamus, dimisimus illos, immo consecuturi praemisimus".

Tertullian's Christian faith undoubtedly added a depth of conviction to his discussions on death as a temporary separation but the image of a journey is identical to that employed by Seneca.

This was not the only motif which he borrowed from classical consolation literature. Other motifs included death as a debt, death as sleep and death as entry into the light. Anim. 50:2, 4-6 ("publica totius generis humani sententia mortem naturae debitum pronuntiamus") bears a certain similarity to Cicero's Tusc. Disp. I. 39:93:

"At ea (nature) quidem dedit usuram uitae tamquam pecuniae nulla praestituta die. Quid est igitur quod querare, si repetit, cum uult? Ea enim condicione acceperas."

A similar sense of the inevitability of the law of nature which demanded death came across in Seneca's Ad. Poly. Consol. 1:3:

"Quis tam superbae impotentisque arrogantiae est, ut in hac naturae necessitate omnia ad eundem finem reuocantis se unum ac suos seponi uelit ruinaeque etiam ipsi mundo imminenti aliquam domum subtrahat?"

Although Tertullian's preoccupation with death as the penalty for sin<sup>17</sup> was conducive to such an equation of death and debt and his version of death as debt focussed upon death as the payment of a due (rather than life as a loan) Gen. 2:17 and 3:19 are, in themselves, insufficient to explain his adoption of the metaphor of debt.

Anim. 42:3, 18-20 ("ita de morte tractabitur ... denique nec speculum eius somnus aliena materia est") displays certain analogies with Cicero's Tusc. Disp. I.38:92 -

"habes somnum imaginem mortis eamque cotidie induis, et dubitas quin sensus in morte nullus sit, cum in eius simulacro uideas esse nullum sensum."

Tertullian may have drawn the opposite conclusion to Cicero from the comparison of death with sleep - concluding as he did that the soul does indeed retain its powers of sensation after death<sup>18</sup> - but it is interesting that in Anim. 43:10, 61 and 43:12, 87, he adopted the identical phrase to that which his classical predecessor had adopted, that is, "imago mortis".<sup>19</sup>

Clearly, Tertullian's failure to describe the death of the ordinary Christian as an act of witness was not due to ignorance of contemporary "consolatio". Furthermore, although his adoption of some of the approaches taken by traditional "consolatio" does not necessarily mean that his original readers were encouraged to attempt to set an example by the manner of their deaths (an example of faith)

it does set the scene for a theory of the "good" death. A precondition for a man setting an example by his death is not simply the belief that it is possible for men to die well but also a recognition of the true character of death.

Nevertheless, a proper recognition of the Tertullianic version of "consolatio" for the bereaved requires a recognition of the extent to which its author's views diverged from contemporary consolation literature too. Unlike Seneca in Ad. Marc. Consol. 1:4 and Ad. Poly. Consol. 2:6, he did not assure the brethren that the renown which the virtues of their loved ones has won them has ensured that they will live on in the memories of man. Unlike Seneca in Ad. Marc. Consol. 19:4-6 and Cicero in Tusc. Disp. I.16 and I. 19-21, he did not comfort them by assuring them that their loved ones will not have to endure suffering after death. (Such an assurance would have been a repudiation of the torments of Gehenna - torments which held a key place in Tertullian's eschatology).<sup>20</sup> Unlike Seneca in Ad. Marc. Consol. 11:2-5, he did not dwell on the frailty and perishability of man's flesh. Perhaps even more surprising in view of his profound awareness of man's sinfulness and divine predestination,<sup>21</sup> he did not reproduce the determinism of a passage such as, Seneca's Ad. Marc. Consol. 10:5 - a determinism which recognised that from birth, man is destined to die:

"Si mortuum tibi filium doles, eius temporis quo natus est crimen est; mors enim illi denuntiata nascenti est; in hanc legem erat satus, hoc illum fatum ab utero statim prosequebatur."

However, the most noteworthy distinction between Tertullianic "consolatio" and its Stoic counterpart is that the former does not comfort the bereaved by reminding them that death released their dear ones from the evils of this life. It also fails to set before them the grim prospect that the deceased, had he lived, might have fallen away from the path of virtue and ceased to be the man whom they loved. These themes had played a prominent role in the consolation literature of Tertullian's age. In Ad. Poly. Consol. 9:4-5, Seneca comforted Polybius by reminding him that his brother:

"Non ira eum torquebit, non morbus affliget, non suspicio lacesset, non edax et inimica semper alienis processibus invidia consecretur, non metus sollicitabit, non leuitas fortunae cito munera sua transferentis inquietabit. Si bene computes, plus illi remissum quam ereptum est."

In Ad. Marc. Consol. 22:2 and 22:3, Seneca admonished Marcia to accept the loss of her son in the following terms:

"Cogita animi mille labes; neque enim recta ingenia qualem in adulescentia spem sui fecerant usque in senectutem pertulerunt, sed interuersa plerumque sunt; aut sera eoque foedior luxuria inuasit coepitque dehonestare speciosa principia, aut in popinam uentremque procubuerunt toti summaque illis curarum fuit, quid essent, quid biberent ... Itaque si felicissimum est non nasci, proximum est, puto, breui aetate defunctos cito in integrum restitui."

In the light of Tertullian's profound consciousness that the world is a place of temptation and danger,<sup>22</sup> these omissions are remarkable.

Replacing these traditional arguments, Tertullian provided the bereaved with inducements to accept their loss which are

absolutely Christian in their ethos. Firstly, death is a summons from the Lord Himself; it is nothing less than a call to enter the presence of Christ. In the words of Pat. 9:4, 14-9:5, 19:

"Ceterum inpatientia in huiusmodi et spei nostrae male ominatur et fidem praeuariat et Christum laedimus cum euocatos quosque ab illo quasi miserandos non aequanimiter accipimus. Cupio, inquit apostolus, recipi iam et esse cum domino".

The personal summons of a loved and loving Master - this is a far cry from the impersonal decree of Fate or Nature, which was the only way in which his Stoic predecessors had felt able to explain death. Seneca's Ad. Poly. Consol. 4:1, with its picture of Fate, harsh and inflexible, stands in marked contrast to Pat. 9:4, 14-9:5, 19:

"Diutius accusare fata possumus, mutare non possumus. Stant dura et inexorabilia; nemo illa conuicio, nemo fletu, nemo causa mouet; nihil umquam ulli parcunt nec remittunt. Proinde parcamus lacrimis nihil proficientibus; facilius enim nos inferis dolor iste adiciet quam illos nobis reducet."  
(Ad. Poly. Consol. 4:1)

By contrast, Pat. 9:4, 14-9:5, 19 is infused with warmth and confidence. Tertullian was positive that the ultimate consummation of the truly Christian death will be entrance into the presence of the Saviour.<sup>23</sup> What is more, that Saviour will welcome His servants. By its use of the verb "recipere", the Vetus Latina edition of Phil.1:23 emphasises that the Christian will be accepted by his Lord, not rejected.

Secondly, death is the prelude to the resurrection. Just as Christ's death had been the preliminary to His triumph over death, the death of the Christian will also be a transient phase. To quote Pat. 9:1, 4-9:2, 8:

"Ne contristemini dormitione cuiusquam sicut nationes quae spe carent. Et merito: credentes enim in resurrectionem Christi in nostram quoque credimus propter quos ille et obiit et resurrexit".

Indeed, for Tertullian, the essence of Christian "consolatio" lies in two interrelated facts. There is hope after death; there is life. Seneca and Cicero had contemplated the possibility that the soul survived after death. They had gone so far as to describe death as the release of the soul from the "prison" and from the "chains"<sup>24</sup> imposed upon it by the flesh; they had described it as an entry into "eternal peace" and a "pure", "bright" vision.<sup>25</sup> For philosophers, however, this was mere hypothesis. The most which could be said with certainty was that death brought annihilation - the end of sensation and with it the end of suffering. To quote Cicero, in Tusc. Disp. I. 49:117:

"Nam si supremus ille dies non extinctionem, sed commutationem adfert loci, quid optabilius? Sin autem perimit ac delet omnino, quid melius quam in mediis uitae laboribus obdormiscere et ita coniuentem somno consopiri sempiterno?"

Similarly, Seneca exhorted his contemporaries to eschew sorrow, on the grounds that to mourn for someone who is incapable of perceiving his fate and who is insensible to the evil which has befallen him is illogical.<sup>26</sup>



Thus, Tertullianic "consolatio" was thoroughly Christianised. It looked back to Christ - to His death and His resurrection. It looked forward to Christ - to Christ seated in glory receiving the dead. However, as Fredouille has noted, it is possible to detect other stands too:

"Le dogme de la résurrection eschatologique, que Tertullien rappelle ici, exclut tout rapprochement, sur le sens de la mort, avec la philosophie païenne. Mais on trouve cependant, sous la plume de Tertullien, deux thèmes fréquents dans la littérature morale profane: la mort n'est qu'un voyage, les défunts ne font que précéder les vivants. Les raisons profondes qu'ont les chrétiens de ne pas pleurer les disparus ne sont plus les mêmes que celles des païens; il y a toutefois, dans la façon de les présenter, un affleurement de l'antique sagesse, une rémanence des thèmes de la prédication morale païenne conciliables avec la pensée chrétienne, comme si, une fois de plus, Tertullien 'actualisait', sur un point particulier, les virtualités de l' 'anima naturaliter christiana'." <sup>27</sup>

When discussing Tertullian's interaction with Stoicism,<sup>28</sup> M.L. Colish failed to examine his relationship with the Stoic "consolatio" literature upon death and bereavement. This was probably due to the fact that many of its arguments were not unique to Stoicism. Death as annihilation and death as a voyage were held in common with the Platonic tradition:

"Ἐννοήσωμεν δὲ καὶ τῆδε ὡς πολλὴ ἐλπίς ἐστὶν ἀγαθὸν αὐτὸ εἶναι. δυσὶν γὰρ θάτερόν ἐστιν τὸ τεθνάναι· ἢ γὰρ οἶον μηδὲν εἶναι μηδὲ αἰθερῶν μηδεμίαν μηδενὸς ἔχειν τὸν τεθνεῶτα, ἢ κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα μεταβολή τις τυγχάνει οὐσα καὶ μετοίκησις τῇ ψυχῇ τοῦ τόπου τοῦ ἐνθένδε εἰς ἄλλον τόπον."

(Apol. 40. C).



The same was true of death as an escape from the soul's imprisonment within the flesh and its entry into a purer, truer vision of reality.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, as both Fredouille and Barnes have noted, Tertullian would have been familiar with the writings of both Cicero and Seneca<sup>30</sup>; Cicero indeed formed an integral part of the "quadriga of standard authors" which the educated man of his era would have studied.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, as Apol. 50:14, 61-62 confirms, it is highly probable that he was conversant with Stoic "consolatio":

"Multi apud uos ad tolerantiam doloris et mortis hortantur, ut Cicero in 'Tusculanis', ut Seneca in 'Fortuitis'."

Tertullian's thought vis à vis death and bereavement was, of course, far too Christianised to be termed Stoic. Nevertheless, Colish has noted that he dipped into Stoic ethics - as and when it suited his purpose.<sup>32</sup> His interaction with Stoic "consolatio" upon death and bereavement is simply another instance of this eclectism. In Anim. 42:2, 9-11, Tertullian quoted Seneca to the effect that after death everything ends, even death itself - "multo coactius Seneca post mortem, ait, omnia finiuntur, etiam ipsa". Whereas Seneca probably intended this statement to be understood in the sense of the destruction (through death) of man's powers of sensation and with them his perception of death itself,<sup>33</sup> Tertullian expounded the statement apocalyptically - that is, in terms of the destruction of death itself.<sup>34</sup> In his exploitation of

classical "consolatio", Tertullian was very much the master of his sources, not their tool.

The fact that he failed to develop a witness-orientated theory of the ordinary Christian death is significant. It is an indication that he did not take the Christian's calling to give "testimony" to the Lord to its logical conclusion

Examples of faith and courage in the face of imminent death must have abounded within the Christian community at Carthage. Yet, instead of exploiting such examples in order to admonish the brethren not to grieve for loved ones who had not themselves grieved when death loomed, Tertullian confined himself to moral platitudes. Instead of using the idea of testifying to Jesus as a means of encouraging his readers to display faith and courage when the Lord summoned them, he confined himself to teaching the brethren patience in the face of bereavement - teaching in which the idea of "testimony" was absent. He turned the idea of death as witness upon its head; the idea that the dying themselves teach their neighbours gave way to a moralist's teaching about death.

3.1.2 Did Tertullian's theological position prevent him from carrying the idea of testimony into his understanding of ordinary death?

Tertullian was not unaware of the need to teach his Carthaginian brethren how to die. He closed the chapter in

which he developed the analogy between sleep and death with the cry - "discis mori et uiuere". When set in context, this phrase from Anim. 43:12, 88 reveals that there were Christians in Carthage who were afraid that the resurrection was a fable and that they would never reawake from the sleep of death. It was for this reason that Tertullian observed, in Anim. 43:12, 85-86, that sleep - "redditum officiis eius resurrectionem mortuorum tibi affirmat". Such Christians were much in need of the testimony which displays of faith and courage might have offered to them. Indeed, it is highly probable that the nourishing of faith to which he referred in Anim. 43:12, 87-88 ("etiam per imaginem mortis fidem initiaris, spem meditaris") was required by a not insignificant proportion of the Carthaginian Church - why else would he have been so urgent, in Anim. 43:9, 56-43:12, 89, when drawing the analogy between sleep and death?

The barrier which prevented Tertullian from developing a witness-orientated theory of ordinary death was twofold - his recognition that martyrdom uniquely constitutes the "good" death and his recognition that death is a penalty imposed by God. The Christian's duty to lay down his life for his God stands out with stark clarity in the works of Tertullian. It was more than a duty, it was an obligation.<sup>35</sup> Martyrdom is not simply a good way to die; it is the way to die. Thus, Fug. 9:4, 39-41 and Anim. 55:5, 36-39 quoting the Montanist oracle which admonishes the faithful to avoid dying comfortably in bed, distinguish the truly virtuous death (that is, death by martyrdom) from such

ignoble deaths as death through fever and death through miscarriage:

"'Nolite in lectulis nec in aborsibus et febris mollibus optare exire, sed in martyriis, uti glorificetur qui est passus pro uobis'."36

Tertullian's allusion to miscarriages may indeed suggest that, in the aforementioned excerpts, he was concentrating on the premature deaths of the young. Nevertheless, illnesses which bring fever in their wake are not the prerogative of the young; they include amidst their victims men of all ages. Therefore, as P. de Labroille appreciates, these excerpts arraign ordinary death in general:

"Une ardeur d'ascétisme respire dans cette exhortation. Ce n'est pas seulement à supporter le martyre que l'Esprit convie les fidèles (y compris les femmes elles-mêmes), mais à le désirer, à l'appeler de leurs vœux, à le préférer à la douceur relative d'une mort ordinaire, et cela pour la gloire du Christ. On songe au mot d'E. Renan, quand il parle du Montanisme, naissant comme d'une 'hallucination de l'ivresse du martyre'."37

Thus, Fug. 9:4, 39-41 and Anim. 55:5, 36-39 are the very antithesis of the idea that ordinary death can be "good". As such, they are also the antithesis of the idea that ordinary death can be an act of testimony.

The acknowledgement that any death except the martyr's death can be a "good" death and that any death except that one can "witness" to Christ would have severely blunted the impact of Tertullian's teaching on martyrdom. It would have made it dangerously easy for his readers to evade their duty and

to apostatise rather than be martyred. Tertullian was too accomplished a polemicist not to appreciate this.

Then there are the implications of death as penalty. By consuming the fruit from the tree of knowledge<sup>38</sup>, Adam transgressed the express command of God. Taken in conjunction with his traducianist theory of conception,<sup>39</sup> this means that the entire human race have become liable to the penalty which God imposed upon Adam. In the words of Anim. 52:2, 14-15, "denique si non deliquisset, nequaquam obisset".

The difficulty in reconciling death as penalty with the "good" death does not lie in the idea of "penalty" itself. Condemnation by the pagan authorities was an integral part of martyrdom<sup>40</sup> and yet martyrdom was, in the eyes of Tertullian, the "good" death par excellence. Being condemned by judicial process does not prevent a man dying with courage and with fortitude. Being condemned as criminals did not prevent the martyrs being ambassadors for their Faith.

Instead, the difficulty lies in the fact that each descendant of Adam has, what N.P. Williams terms, an "inherited bias towards sin".<sup>41</sup> Thus, not merely is the "juridicial record of the sin of Adam ... binding on his posterity also", the character of his posterity is fatally flawed.<sup>42</sup> To quote Anim. 41:1, 1-41:2, 8:

"Malum igitur animae, praeter quod ex obuentu spiritus nequam superstruitur, ex originis uitio antecedit, naturale quodammodo. Nam, ut diximus,

naturae corruptio alia natura est, habens suum deum et patrem, ipsum scilicet corruptionis auctorem, ut tamen insit et bonum animae, illud principale, illud diuinum atque germanum et proprie naturale. Quod enim a deo est, non tam extinguatur quam obumbratur."  
(Anim. 41:1, 1-41:2, 8)

Now, the claim that man has inherited a propensity to sin (the Pauline "law" within man's "members")<sup>43</sup> implies that he is a wretched creature for whom virtue is a distant, unattained goal. By contrast, the claim that a man has died well implies that virtue is attainable, here and now, in this life.

The idea that the death of the ordinary Christian bears witness to those who behold it also presupposes that man is capable of virtuous action, because it is to presuppose that man is capable of the calmness and the steadfastness which will be necessary if his death is to shine forth like a beacon.

Although the doctrine that the Christian is guided and is strengthened throughout his life by the Holy Spirit could have provided an escape from these difficulties, Tertullian did not take it, preferring to associate the assistance of the Spirit pre-eminently with the death of the martyr.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, his consciousness of man's sinfulness reinforced his already present unease about the suggestion that, by his steadfastness in the face of death, the ordinary Christian bears witness to the depth of his Faith.

Due to his retention of an element of free will and his failure to perceive the need for infant baptism, his thought



cannot be properly characterised as a doctrine of original sin.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the Fall and its consequences played a vital role in his thinking.

If Tertullian had applied the consequences of man's fallen nature to his theology of death logically, of course, they should have also prevented him from believing that the martyr had sufficient residual virtue to accept his own death; he should have been too self-interested. He did not apply them logically, however. This when combined with Tertullian's teaching on the Holy Spirit meant that a special infusion of heavenly strength, married to the residual goodness within his own nature, triumphed over the martyr's moral frailty.

### 3.2 Martyrdom as the act of witnessing to mankind.

Tertullian recognised that by his fortitude in the face of suffering, the martyr testifies to the truth of the Faith for which he dies. He also recognised that often that testimony was offered by means of a body which had been broken by torture and enfeebled by insufficient food. Resurr. 8:5, 19 and 8:5, 20-23 was unequivocal in its condemnation of prisons as grim, even brutal places:

"Age iam, quid de ea (flesh) sentis ... cum in carceribus maceratur teterrimo lucis exilio penuria mundi squalore praedore contumelia uictus, ne somno quidem libera, quippe ipsis etiam cubilibus uincta ipsisque stramentis lancinata".

(When towards the end of his career - in Ieiun. 12:3, 27-12:4, 12 - Tertullian depicted prison as a place of comfort and plenty, he did so not because he believed conditions had



improved but because he wished to cast aspersions upon his Psychic opponents.) Yet, for all his injuries and his weakness, the prospective martyr does not waiver when he is led out into the raucous amphitheatre.<sup>46</sup> The faggots, the sword, the cross and the wild beasts<sup>47</sup> - these tools of execution do not have the power to overwhelm his faith.

The typical human reaction in the face of the horrors of the amphitheatre would be terror - terror evidenced in trembling limbs and pale visage. This must have been the entertainment for which the crowd in the amphitheatre was waiting with anticipation. This can be demonstrated by Pass. Perp. 20:5, 9-11, where the redactor notes that it was essential for the martyrs to avoid giving the impression that they are "mourning" during their hour of triumph.<sup>48</sup>

Instead of displaying terror and vain regrets, however, the prospective martyr exhibits unshakable faith and amazing endurance. The words enlisted by Tertullian, in Pat. 13:7, 28 and Scap. 5:4, 24, to describe this phenomenon are "patientia" and "tolerantia", respectively. It is within this context of evangelism by deeds that a passage like Scap. 5:4, 22-26 must be understood:

"Nec tamen deficient haec secta, quam tunc magis aedificari scias, cum caedi uidetur. Quisque enim tantam tolerantiam spectans, ut aliquo scrupulo percussus et inquirere accenditur, quid sit in causa, et ubi cognouerit ueritatem et ipse statim sequitur".

It is the faith of the martyr (a faith which shines through all his sufferings) which wins converts to the Faith. The

Gospel's words of love, hope and power are translated in the amphitheatre into "words" of blood, sweat and anguish.

3.2.1 Confession and testimony - Biblical concepts -  
Matthean concepts?

For Tertullian, martyrdom as the act whereby the Christian bears witness to his Lord was frequently expressed in terms of the language of "confession" and "testimony". That, in turn, rested upon the language of the Bible. The language of "confession" was inspired by such a text as Mt. 10:32:

"Omnis ergo qui confitebitur me coram hominibus, confitebor et ego eum coram patre meo, qui est in caelis".

The language of "testimony" was inspired by such a text as Mt. 10:17-18:

"Adtendite vobis ab hominibus: tradent enim vos in conciliis et in synagogis suis flagellabunt vos. Et apud reges et praesides stabitis propter me in testimonium illis et gentibus."

However, in his application of the vocabulary of "witness", Tertullian displayed a marked predilection for the language of "confession". With direct reference to physical death for the sake of the Gospel, he employed "confessio" seventeen times, "confessor" six times and "confliteri" ten times.<sup>49</sup> Scorp. 10:9, 9-12, and 10:11, 19-10:13, 26 remind the faithful that confession of the Name is inextricably linked to the torments which the pagan persecutors inflict upon the martyrs:

"Quid itaque cessas, audacissime haeretice, totum ordinem Christianae concussionis in superna transferre et inprimis ipsum nominis odium illic collocare, ubi ad patris dexteram praesidet Christus? ... Erit certe etiam carcer in caelo carens sole aut ingratis luminosus et uincula fortasse de zonis et eculeus axis ipse qui torquet. Tum si lapidandus Christianus, grandines aderunt, si urendus, fulmina prae manu sunt, si trucidandus, Orionis armati manus operabitur, si bestiis finiendus, ursas septentrio emittet, zodiacus tauros et leones. Haec qui sustinuerit in finem, iste erit saluus. Ergone et finis in caelis et passio et occisio et prima confessio?"

Indeed, Marc. IV. 28:5, 17-20 implicitly equated "confession" of the Name and being put to death for the sake of the Faith:

"Si enim confessorem confitebitur, ipse est, qui et negatorem negabit. Porro si confessor est, cui nihil timendum est post occisionem, negator erit, cui timendum est etiam post mortem."

By contrast, the language of "testimony" appears rarely with reference to martyrdom. Within such a context, Tertullian used the word "testimonium" six times and "testari" once.<sup>50</sup> Uxor. I.3:4, 22-23 exults in the blessed condition enjoyed, in the hereafter, by those who die "testifying" to Christ - "quae qui ualent beat: a testimonii confessione excedere". Scorp. 9:9, 17-19 asserts that it is only by acknowledging that he is a Christian that a man genuinely "testifies" to Christ -

"qui se Christianum confitetur, Christi se esse testatur, qui Christi est, in Christo sit necesse est."

Is it possible to account for Tertullian's predilection for the language of "confession"?

The wider implications of the "confessio" word-group and the "testimonium" word-group are not discussed by C. Mohrmann in her study of early Christian Latin.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, in the classical world, "confessio" and its derivatives normally meant making an "acknowledgement" of someone or admitting the truth of something, whereas "testimonium" and its derivatives were normally found in a legal setting, that is, a witness gave "testimony" in a court.

To the classical mind, the connotations of the "testimonium" word-group would indeed have been principally those of the law court. This is confirmed by a perusal of some of Cicero's courtroom defence speeches. When defending his client against a charge of patricide, Cicero reminded the judges that the evidence of untrustworthy witnesses should be discounted - in the words of Pro Sext. 22:62,

"in quo scelere, iudices, etiam cum multae causae conuenisse unum in locum atque inter se congruere uidentur, tamen non temere creditur, neque leui coniectura res penditur, neque testis incertus auditur, neque accusatoris ingenio res iudicatur."

Similarly, in Pro Cluen. 69:196-197, he cited the "testimony" which the citizens of the defendant's town gave to his good character:

"Itaque eis eum uerbis publice laudant, ut non solum testimonium suum iudiciumque significant, uerum etiam curam animi ac dolorem. Quae dum laudatio recitatur, uos quaeso, qui eam detulistis, adsurgite. Ex lacrimis horum, iudices, existimare potestis omnes haec decuriones decreuisse lacrimantes. Age uero, uicinorum quantum studium, quam incredibilis beneuolentia, quanta cura est! Non illi in libellis laudationem decretam miserunt, sed homines honestissimos, quos nossemus omnes, huc frequentes adesse et hunc praesentes laudare uoluerunt."

When Cicero did employ the "confessio" word-group within the confines of the courtroom, he did so merely to acknowledge a point in an argument - not to refer to the testimony of witnesses. To quote Pro Arch. 11:27:

"Qua re in qua urbe imperatores prope armati poetarum nomen et Musarum delubra coluerunt, in ea non debent togati iudices a Musarum honore et a poetarum salute abhorrere. Atque ut id libentius faciatis, iam me uobis, iudices, indicabo et de meo quodam amore gloriae nimis acri fortasse, uerum tamen honesto uobis confitebor."

Tertullian's preference for the language of "confession" was not the result of a desire to dispense with or even to downplay the juridicial implications of "testifying" to Christ. He was quite aware that "confession" of the Name took place against the background of juridicial torture and legal trial before hostile authorities.<sup>52</sup> (Martyrdom must be viewed against the background of the "coercitio" proceedings).<sup>53</sup> Indeed, his own exposition of Mt. 10:32-33 were not infrequently imbued with juridicial overtones. Thus, Scorp. 10:9, 5-9 and 10:11, 15-19 asserted:

"Suppetit adhuc dicere: si in caelestibus confitendum, et hic negandum est. Nam ubi alterum, ibi utrumque. Aemula enim quaeque concurrunt. Etiam persecutionem in caelis agitari oportebit, quae confessionis negationisue materia est ... Sed et fratres nostros et patres et filios et socrus et nurus et domesticos nostros ibidem exhibere debetis, per quos traditio disposita est; item reges et praesides et armatas potestates, apud quas causa pugnanda est."

Scorp. 10:11, 18-19 does echo Mt. 10:18 in its application of the language of "testimony" to the act of witnessing before the rulers of this world but when set within the wider context, Scorp. 10:9, 5-10:13, 26 merely underlines

the fact that being tried in the name of the Faith and "confessing" Christ ought to be one and the same.

By the same token there is no clear evidence that Tertullian's preference for the language of "confession" was a consequence of his conversion in Montanism. Indeed, although a significant proportion of such language appears in works which were marked by Montanism, the vast majority of the cases appear in works written before his conversion to that creed. The prominence of the language of "confession" in Scorp., Uxor. and Ual.<sup>54</sup> means that it is dangerous to build too much upon the role played by the language of "confession" in Marc., Fug., Cor., Prax. and Ieiun.<sup>55</sup>

This danger is exacerbated by the fact that the language of "testimony" can also be found in both his Montanist and his Catholic works. Since it is still applied sparingly in Resurr. and Anim.,<sup>56</sup> Tertullian could not have experienced a significant change of heart since writing Uxor., Scorp. and Ual.<sup>57</sup>

Likewise, it would be a mistake to place too much significance upon the absence of the language of "confession" or "testimony" from Mart. Apol. 39:6, 25-31, a passage practically contemporaneous with Mart., employs the language of "confession" to describe the act for which Christians are exiled to the mines:

"Quippe non epulis inde nec potaculis nec ingratis  
uoratrinis dispensatur, sed egenis alendis  
humandisque et pueris ac puellis re ac parentibus



destitutis, iamque domesticis senibus iam otiosis, item naufragis, et si qui in metallis et si qui in insulis uel in custodiis, dumtaxat ex causa dei sectae, alumni confessionis suae fiunt".

Instead, Tertullian's preference should probably be explained by his considerable reliance upon Mt. 10:16-39 as a "source" for his martyr theology. This has been alluded to briefly in the previous chapter. When discussing martyrdom, Tertullian quoted verses from Mt. 10:16-39 far more than any other Biblical text.<sup>58</sup>

Here, it is interesting to note that of the many Johannine texts which employ the word "testimonium", the only ones with which Tertullian displayed an acquaintance, in his general theology, were Jn. 1:32, 5:31-32, 5:36-37, 5:39, 8:18 and 10:25.<sup>59</sup> He ignored Jn. 1:7-8, where the mission of John the Baptist, the supreme human witness to Christ, is proclaimed and Jn. 1:15, where Jesus is described as the Witness to the Truth - the Witness who has no peer. He ignored Jn. 21:24, where the author of John's Gospel casts himself in the role of witness - witness to Christ's life and death. On the face of it, Jn. 1:7-8, 1:15, 18:37 and 21:24 were all texts which might have been incorporated easily and with profit in a witness-orientated theology of martyrdom. Tertullian's failure to do so is startling and significant.

What is more, with the exception of Jn. 1:32, where John the Baptist testified to the descent of the Spirit upon the Son of Man, Tertullian used the Johannine "testimony" texts which he did cite to demonstrate that true testimony is



given not by a person of himself but of that person by another. Thus, his interest in them was due not to any contribution which they might have made to his theology of martyrdom but rather the corroboration which they provide of the Son's mission and of the interrelations which prevail within the Trinity.<sup>60</sup>

The meagre Biblical underpinning which Tertullian provided for the vocabulary of "testimony" can be demonstrated by the fact that, in his martyr theology, the only "testimony" texts which he did exploit were Mt. 10:18, Mk. 13:9 and Lk. 21:13.<sup>61</sup>

Fug. 6:2, 16-19 is representative of his approach - a combination of strict adherence to the actual words of the Bible and prompt application of these words to the situation of third century Carthaginians:

"Etiam si apprehendamus, non in concilia eorum perducemur nec in synagogis eorum flagellabimur, sed Romanis utique potestatibus et tribunalibus obiciemur".

Nonetheless, important though the idea of giving "testimony" before the rulers of this world was for Tertullian, the texts in question did not appear sufficiently frequently to sustain the language of "testimony" singlehanded.

The lesson of his interaction with those Biblical verses which urge the martyr to "confess" Christ is strikingly different. Although the pagan authorities' hostility to the faithful should have made Mt. 10:18, Mk. 13:9 and Lk. 21:13, peculiarly apposite to Tertullian, he quoted them

unambiguously just eight times in all. By contrast, he quoted Mt. 10:32-33 or Lk. 12:8-9 on twenty separate occasions.<sup>62</sup> Of those twenty as many as seventeen may well have been allusions to Mt. 10:32-33.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, as Scorp. 9:8, 11-9:10,6 illustrates, Mt. 10:32-33 occupied a pivotal position in his reflections on martyrdom:

"'Omnis igitur, qui in me confessus fuerit coram hominibus, et ego confitebor in illo coram patre meo, qui in caelis est? Et omnis, qui me negauerit coram hominibus, et ego negabo illum coram patre meo, qui in caelis est'. Manifesta, ut opinor, definitio et ratio est tam confessionis quam negationis, etsi dispositio diuersa est. Qui se Christianum confitetur, Christi se esse testatur, qui Christi est, in Christo sit necesse est. Si in Christo est, in Christo utique confitetur, cum se Christianum confitetur. Hoc enim non potest esse, nisi sit in Christo. Porro in Christo confitendo Christum quoque confitetur, qui sit in ipso, dum et ipse in illo est, utpote Christianus. Nam et si diem dixeris, lucis rem ostendisti, quae diem praestat, licet non dixeris lucem. Ita etsi non directo pronuntiauit qui me confessus fuerit, non est diuersus actus quotidianae confessionis a sensu dominicae pronuntiationis. Quod enim est qui se confitetur, id est Christianum, etiam id, per quod est, confitetur, id est Christum. Proinde qui se negauit Christianum, in Christo negauit, negando se esse in Christo, dum negat se Christianum; et Christum autem in se negando, dum se in Christo negat, Christum quoque negabit. Ita et qui in Christo negauerit, Christum negabit et qui in Christo confessus fuerit, Christum confitebitur."

Tertullian pursued his readers with a ruthless logic. In Scorp. 9:1, 13-9:5, 21, he had stated his objective - to prove that dying for the sake of the Faith is an integral part of the divine ordinance. In Scorp. 9:6, 27-9:8, 11, he had reminded them that the ultimate destination of those who ignore that ordinance will be the fires of Gehenna. Then,

in the passage quoted above, he demonstrated that even being equivocal about whether or not one is a member of the Church is per se a denial of the Lord of that Church. By calling himself Christian, a man concedes that he is a member of Christ's body. Therefore, by denying that he is a Christian, a man rejects Christ Himself. For Tertullian, the one premise led on from the other and both propositions depended, as Scorp. 9:8, 11-17 saw clearly, on Mt. 10:32-33.

Having proved that "confession" of Christ is the Christian's obligation, he went on to establish, in Scorp. 10:9, 5-10:16,21, that that confession must occur in this life, not in the hereafter. It is not possible to determine whether Tertullian intended to allude to Mt. 10:32-33 or Lk. 12:8-9, in Scorp. 10:1, 29-10:17, 4<sup>64</sup> but his indebtedness to the Synoptic "confession" tradition is unmistakable. However, his indebtedness in Scorp. 11:1, 5-11:2, 14 is definitely to the Matthean tradition:<sup>65</sup>

"Eadem igitur forma cetera quoque ad martyrii statum pertinere defendimus. 'Qui pluris', inquit, 'fecerit etiam animam suam quam me, non est me dignus, id est qui maluerit uiuere me negando quam mori confitendo, et, qui animam suam inuenerit, perdet illam, qui uero perdiderit mei causa, inueniet illam'. Perinde enim inuenit eam qui negat lucri faciendo uitam, ut perdet in gehennam qui se putat negando lucri facere eam. Perdet autem eam ad praesens qui confessus occiditur, sed et inuenturus eam in uitam aeternam."

The importance of Mt. 10:32-33 in the composition of this extract is evident - it taught its author that denial merits Gehenna.

Chapters such as Scorp. 9:1, 10-9:13, 28, 10:1, 29-10:17, 4, Fug. 6:1, 1-6:7, 65 and 7:1, 1-7:2, 34 depended heavily upon Mt. 10:16-39. Indeed, those from Scorp. are little more than a catena of Biblical quotations.

It was Tertullian's familiarity with Synoptic understanding of martyrdom and more particularly with the Matthean understanding which encouraged him to favour the vocabulary of "confession" in his exposition of the martyr as witness. The clue to the Tertullianic vision of witness lies in the frequency with which he returned to Mt. 10:32-33.

The consequences of Tertullian's predilection for the language of "confession" were twofold. It highlighted the fact that martyrdom as witness is the recognition and the proclamation of a Person<sup>66</sup> (not merely that of a fact). This aspect of witness was, of course, implicit within the language of "testimony"<sup>67</sup> too but the overtones of martyrdom as confession were probably more profoundly personal. It also highlighted the fact that, as it is found in the writings of Tertullian, martyrdom as witness was principally a Matthean concept.

Important though confession of Jesus was, however, in his theology of martyrdom, a comparison of that theology with Origen's Mart. Prot. 35:297, 15-25 reveals that Tertullian had not worked out the repercussions of martyrdom as witness as thoroughly and in as much detail as he might have done. In the aforementioned passage, Origen noting that there is a discrepancy between the wording of Mt. 10:32 and Lk. 12:8

(the former implying that acknowledgement of the martyr will be made by the Son of God and the latter implying that the Son of Man will perform the same duty) observes that in His capacity as Son of God, Christ will vouch for them before the Father and that in His capacity as Son of Man, He will vouch for them before the angels. The same pattern will apply to Jesus' denial of apostates:

Ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ μὲν Ματθαῖος ἀνέγραψεν, ὁμολογήσω καὶ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς, ὁ δὲ Λουκᾶς, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁμολογήσει ἐν αὐτῷ ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀγγέλων τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐφίστημι, μή ποτε ὁ μὲν πάσης κτίσεως, πρωτότοκος, ἢ εἰκὼν τοῦ ἀοράτου θεοῦ, ὁμολογήσῃ τὸν ὁμολογήσαντα ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς πατρὸς, ὁ δὲ γενόμενος, ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, τυγχάνῃ καὶ γενόμενος ἐκ γυναικὸς καὶ αὐτῆς οὔσης ἀνθρώπου καὶ διὰ τοῦτο χρηματίζων υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, ὅσπερ νοεῖται ὁ κατὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἄνθρωπος, ὁμολογήσῃ τοὺς ὁμολογήσαντας, ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀγγέλων τοῦ θεοῦ. τὸ δ' ἀνάλογον καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀρνησομένων ἀποδοτέον."

Such theological sophistication does not appear in Tertullian's theology of "confession" - the closest which he came to it was his recognition that martyrdom is, at one and the same time, an act of witness to man and an act of witness to God. Might it not be the case that the contrast between Origen's sophisticated theology of witness and Tertullian's less subtle theory points to the fact that the latter theologian was not so deeply engaged with the idea of "witnessing" to Jesus?

### 3.2.2 Martyrdom as witness - the product of New Testament Apocalyptic?

Although the New Testament concept of "confessing" the Lordship of Christ had its roots in the tradition of something or someone "testifying" to the truth (as that

tradition is found in the Old Testament),<sup>68</sup> by and large, Tertullian failed to reinforce his argument by citing those Old Testament quotations in which that tradition is recorded. This was true not merely of his martyr theology but of his theology in general. He overlooked those verses where objects had borne witness to and witness against the Hebrews, for example, Gen. 31:48, 31:52, Deut. 31:21, Josh. 24:27 and Isa. 19:20.<sup>69</sup> He neglected those verses where the Jew's own sins are said to testify against them, for example, Isa. 59:12 and Jer. 14:7.<sup>70</sup> He even failed to quote such texts as Isa. 43:10 and Jer. 1:17,<sup>71</sup> texts in which the faithful servant of God is depicted as God's "witness" - texts which appear highly apposite to any theory of martyrdom as witness.

Tertullian did exploit a few Old Testament witness-orientated texts - notably, Isa. 40:8-9, 44:8, 44:26, 55:4 and Jer. 1:9 - but his purpose in so doing was to elucidate his Christology and his soteriology. It was not to develop his martyr theology.

The inference must be that when seeking Biblical foundations for martyrdom as witness, Tertullian turned to the New Testament, rather than to the Old Testament. (The tradition of the martyred prophet owed more to the Midrash than to the precise teaching of the Old Testament). The inference is confirmed by a closer examination of Jer. 1:17. Encapsulated within Jer. 1:17, there is the message of both Mt. 10:32-33 and 10:19-20 - texts which Tertullian exploited to the full:



"But you gird up your loins; arise, and say to them everything that I commanded you. Do not be dismayed by them, lest I dismay you before them."

Like the words of the martyrs in a later generation, Jeremiah's words come from the Almighty. The outcome of Jeremiah's failing to bear the desired witness will be that God will shame him in the eyes of the very people before whom he has been ashamed of God. If Tertullian's theory of witness had had firm foundations in the Old Testament, he would surely have exploited this parallel.

By contrast, an examination of the Biblical data which he did employ reveals that his theory of witness rested upon firm New Testament foundations. Prominent texts included Mt. 10:16-18, 10:19-20, 10:32-33, 24:9-13, Mk. 13:9, Lk. 12:8, 21:12-15, Acts 1:8, Rom. 10:9-10, I Tim. 6:12-13, 2 Tim. 1:8-9, I Jn. 4:2-3, I Pet. 4:12-14, Rev. 2:13, 6:9 and 20:4.<sup>72</sup>

Moreover, set in context, the majority of these texts are an integral part of apocalyptic exhortations; the end of the world is high, the Parousia is imminent and the need to bear testimony to the Messiah is urgent. Indeed, bearing testimony to the Messiah has its place in the scheme of the "last days":

"For truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes"  
(Mt. 10:23)

and



"Then he said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven. But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake'." (Lk. 21:10-12).

If anyone doubts the apocalyptic context of Tertullian's theory of witness, they should remember that Lk. 21:12-13 with its command to testify to Christ was bound on the one side by the text quoted above and on the other side by Lk. 21:25-27 - where the shaking of the heavens is described as the immediate prelude to the Parousia. If the Biblical foundations of his theory of witness are to be properly understood the foregoing "witness" texts must be read in the light of the apocalyptic elements within Mt. 10:16-39, 24:3-14, Mk. 13:9-23, Lk. 21:10-18, I Tim. 6:12-16, I Jn. 4:2-3, Rev. 2:9-13, 6:9-11 and 20:1-15.

Martyrdom is the direct result of persecution by the enemies of the Messiah and it is the prelude to eternal bliss. To rephrase it in terms familiar to Mk. 13:9, he who "endures to the end" will be "saved". Furthermore, the act of witness which constitutes martyrdom is an integral part of an eschatological scheme which includes the final judgement, the unquenchable fire and the eternal joys of heaven. Dressed in white robes and awaiting the Parousia in Paradise, the martyrs are those over whom, in the words of Rev. 20:6, "the second death has no power". Both their avenging and their entry into ultimate bliss have their predetermined moment in the divine plan - having rested in Paradise until the "number" of their fellow brethren is

"complete" (Rev. 6:11)<sup>73</sup> the martyrs will enjoy in their turn, the fruits of the millennium and the sight of divine retribution being exacted upon their persecutors at the final judgement (Rev. 6:10).

Whilst it would be an exaggeration to categorise Tertullian's concept of witness as an eschatological one, it would not be wrong to conclude that that concept was intimately bound up with his eschatological assumptions. An examination of his Biblical citations proves that he was familiar with the apocalyptic background which lay behind many of his "witness" texts.<sup>74</sup>

Furthermore, in his own discussions of martyrdom as an act of witness, he often made that apocalyptic background explicit. For the author of Fug. 7:1, 9-7:2, 34, the Christian's refusal to confess his Lord could have but one result - the fires of Gehenna. To quote Fug. 7:1, 9-15 and 7:2, 32-34:

"'Qui confessus fuerit me et ego confitebor illum coram patre meo'. Quomodo confitebitur fugiens? Quomodo fugiet confitens? 'Qui mei confusus fuerit, et ego confundar eius coram patre meo'. Si deuito passionem, confundor confessionem. 'Felices qui persecutionem passi fuerint causa nominis mei'. Infelices ergo qui fugiendo ex praecepto non erunt passi. 'Qui sustinuerit in finem, iste saluabitur' ... Postremo in Apocalypsi non fugam timidus offert, sed inter ceteros reprobos particulam in stagnum sulphuris et ignis, quod est mors secunda".

The message of Marc. IV 28:5, 18-22 and Scorp. 9:6, 27-9:6, 2 is identical - denial merits Gehenna.

Similarly, in Scorp. 10:8, 24-10:8, 5 and 11:1, 6-11:2, 14, confession of our Lord could have but one result - entry into life eternal and unending bliss. Speaking of the Christian's earthly life, Scorp. 11:2, 12-14 declared that whosoever lays his life down as a witness will be recompensed by its restitution in the sphere of eternal bliss - "perdet autem eam ad praesens qui confessus occiditur, sed et inuenturus eam in uitam aeternam".

As for an excerpt such as Marc. IV. 39:3, 1-9 and IV. 39:6, 1-39:7, 10, it underlines the fact that the testimony to Jesus borne by the martyr comes at a specific juncture in the wider eschatological scheme, that is, it is one of the signs that the Parousia is approaching. In Tertullian's own words:

Uideamus et quae signa temporibus imponat: 'bella', opinor, 'et regnum super regnum et gentem super gentem et pestem et fames terraeque motus et formidines et prodigia de caelo', quae omnia seuero et atroci deo congruunt. Haec cum adicit etiam oportere fieri, quem se praestat? Destructorem an probatorem creatoris? Cuius dispositiones confirmat impleri oportere, quas ut optimus tam tristes quam atroces abstulisset potius quam constituisset, si non ipsius fuissent ... Et hic igitur ipse cogitari uetat, quid responderi oporteat apud tribunalia, qui et Balaam quod non cogitauerat, immo contra quam cogitauerat suggessit et Moysi causato linguae tarditatem os repromisit. Et sapientiam ipsam, cui nemo resistet, per Esaiam demonstrauit: 'hic dicet: ego dei sum, et hic clamabit: in nomine Iacob, et alius inscribetur in nomine Israhelis'. Quid enim sapientius et incontradicibilis confessione simplici et exerta in martyris nomine, 'cum deo inualescentis', quod est interpretatio Israhelis?"

Tertullian's acute awareness of the powers (human and otherwise) who were hostile to the martyr,<sup>75</sup> coupled with his exploitation of the apocalyptic dimension within his

Biblical sources, demonstrate that his understanding of martyrdom as an act of witness was the product not merely of New Testament teaching but of New Testament Apocalyptic. It must be noted in passing, however, that his failure to exploit the Old Testament's teaching on witnessing deprived his theory of valuable additional support.

### 3.2.3 Martyrdom : sowing the seed of faith

"Etiam plures efficimur, quotiens metimur a uobis: semen est sanguis Christianorum! Multi apud uos ad tolerantiam doloris et mortis hortantur ... nec tamen tantos inueniunt uerba discipulos, quantos Christiani factis docendo. Ipsa illa obstinatio, quam exprobratis, magistra est. Quis enim non contemplatione eius concutitur ad requirendum, quid intus in re sit? Quis non, ubi requisivit, accedit, ubi accessit, pati exoptat, ut totam dei gratiam redimat, ut omnem ueniam ab eo compensatione sanguinis sui expediat?"

Here, in Apol. 50:13, 59-61 and 50:14, 63-50:15, 70, Tertullian made one of his best remembered statements - that is, that it is the blood of the Christians which constitutes the "seed" from which the Church springs. By this he meant that it is the endurance displayed by the martyrs which inspires those who behold it to investigate the Faith which enkindles such endurance, to embrace that Faith and to emulate that endurance.

What are the implications of the metaphor of the "seed"? The metaphor of the "seed" sown in the ground has the virtue of emphasising that the slaughter of its members does not lead to the decline of the Church; it leads instead to its renewal and its resurgence.

As Resurr. 12:4, 14-12:5, 22 appreciated, the planting of a seed is simply the preliminary to the appearance of a shoot above the soil. In the words of Resurr. 52:8, 27-31:

"Seritur enim solummodo granum sine folliculi ueste, sine fundamento spicae, sine munimento aristae, sine superbia culmi. Exurgit autem copia feneratum, compagine aedificatum, ordine structum, cultu munitum et usquequaque uestitum".

In the same way, the death of the martyr is the preliminary to the conversion of yet another person to Christianity.

It is significant that, in Scap. 5:4, 22-23 (a passage which has marked parallels with Apol. 50:13, 59-61) Tertullian chose to adopt the vocabulary of "falling" and "rising anew" to describe the effect of martyrdom upon the Church and its outreach. The words in question are "caedere" and "aedificare".<sup>76</sup> Such words are not incompatible with the image of the seed scattered in the soil and growing upwards towards the light. ("Sicut et granum corpus seritur corpus resurgit. Seminationem denique uocauit dissolutionem corporis in terram, quia seritur in corruptela, in dedecoratione, in infirmitate, resurgit autem in incorruptelam, in honestatem, in uirtutem.")<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, as J.P. Waltzing has observed, Tertullian's choice of the verb "metere", in Apol. 50:13, 60, extends the "agricultural" metaphor - meaning as it does "to reap" or "to harvest" a crop. I quote:

"'Etiam plures efficimur'. Tous les apologistes constatent cet effet des persécutions. S. Justin, Apol. II, 12, 1. Dial, avec Tryphon, 110. Arnobe, 2,5. Lactance, Div. Inst., 5, 13, 10; 19, 9. Epître à Diognète, 6: 'καὶ Χριστιανοὺ κολαζόμενου καθ' ἡμέραν πλεονάζουσι μᾶλλον.

- 'Quotiens metimur a uobis', 'chaque fois que nous sommes moissonnés par vous', métaphore qui amène la phrase célèbre: 'semen est ...' La vigne qu'on émonde, dit déjà S. Justin (Dial., 110) pousse des bourgeons plus riches et plus féconds. Tertullien a donné à l'idée sa forme définitive."<sup>78</sup>

Strictly speaking, the metaphor of a seed does not include amongst its connotations the transmission of knowledge or the articulation of belief. Therefore, since both these ideas are fundamental to the act of bearing witness to mankind, the metaphor might appear to have had its limitations. Yet, in Apol. 50:13, 60-61, Tertullian was confident that the metaphor of the seed successfully conveyed those ideas. From whence did such confidence come?

Since as Marc. II. 25:3, 17-19 proves, Tertullian was indeed familiar with Gen. 4:10, he probably regarded Abel's blood as a prototype for the martyr's blood; if the blood of the first<sup>79</sup> just man had been able to articulate itself, why should the blood of his successors, the martyrs, not be able to do so also? It had been the blood of Abel, not his voice, which had cried out to God:

"Sicut de Cain sciscitatur, ubinam frater eius, quasi non iam uociferatum a terra sanguinem Abelis audisset."  
(Marc. II. 25:3, 17-19).

In the works of Tertullian, there are some forty-two instances of the word "sanguis" in relation to the concept of life,<sup>80</sup> fifteen of which are set explicitly within the context of martyrdom.<sup>81</sup> These examples all depend upon the association of blood with the life-principle or life-force (an association which was the product of ancient sacrificial



theory). This association will be discussed in detail in chapter five. Here, it is sufficient to note the conclusions of F. Young:

"The blood, as essential to life, was regarded as the life-principle (nephesh). The life-principle was released in sacrifice in order to effect, in primitive quasi-magical thought, the production of more abundant life, that is, to make the crops grow and the flocks increase ... Traditionally the blood was sacred to Jahweh as the life-principle; in P the blood had its efficacious power because it was created and given by Jahweh."<sup>82</sup>

It is but a small step from the view that the holy man is murdered because of his testimony, to the view that his blood (his spent life-force) was itself the medium through which he gave that testimony.

An interpretation of the blood-wrung "seed" based on the analogy between the blood of Abel and that of the martyr is beset with difficulties. The closest which Tertullian came to such an analogy was in Scorp. 8:2, 25-8:3, 1, where he depicted Abel as the first of the martyrs.<sup>83</sup> However, that passage makes no reference to the "vocalisation" of Abel's blood. Moreover, when he did explicitly record that "vocalisation", he noted that Abel's blood had cried out to God alone; it had not sought the ear of men. It is true that a difference in the recipient of a communication does not detract from the fact that it has been possible for a communication to be made. Nevertheless, without this discrepancy, the link between Abel's blood and that of the martyr would have been more certain. Finally, Tertullian omitted a Biblical text which would have further underpinned the "vocalisation" of blood - that is, Heb. 12:24.<sup>84</sup>



"And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel".

On balance, however, I believe still that it is in the figure of Abel and the identification of blood with life that one side of any explanation of the assumption upon which Apol. 50:13, 59-61 is based must lie - the assumption that blood can transmit knowledge.

The other side of any explanation must take into account the context of Apol. 50:13, 59-61. When that extract is set in context, it is evident that, in the eyes of Tertullian, there was a sense in which the "seed" from which the conversion of the pagan onlooker springs is not the death of the martyr itself but the personal faith which made that death possible. In other words, it was not so much the shedding of the martyr's blood which "witnessed" to those onlookers (for violence was not uncommon in the ancient world)<sup>85</sup> but the resolution in the face of personal anguish and the confidence in the fidelity of his God which lay behind the martyr's "blood-letting". A key word for the elucidation of Apol. 50:13, 59-61 is to be found in Apol. 50:15, 65; it is the word "obstinatio". The importance of that word is confirmed by a comparison of Apol. 50:13, 59-50:15, 17 with an analogous passage, Scap. 5:4, 22-26, where he declares that it is the sight of the martyrs' "tolerantia" which impels pagans to convert.<sup>86</sup>

Thus, whilst the metaphor of the "seed" is not evocative of the act of giving "testimony" (when read in isolation) the

words which Tertullian chose to elucidate that metaphor were so evocative. "Contemplare" and "requirere"<sup>87</sup> - to the fore in Apol. 50:15, 65-67, the overtones of these words are those of "observing" something and then "assimilating" that which has been observed. A similar emphasis on the didactic quality of the martyrs' deaths is to be found in Scap. 5:4, 22-26; there it is expressed by such words as "spectare" and "inquirere".

The "seed" as faith and the "seed" as blood (though intimately associated) are not absolutely synonymous. The former implies that it is primarily the belief behind the martyr's suffering which wins converts to the Faith, the latter implies that it is the actual suffering itself. When he provided an exegesis of Apol. 50:13, 59-61, in Apol. 50:14, 61-50:15, 70, Tertullian does not seem to have recognised this disparity.

The disparity could be removed by dismissing the blood-wrung "seed", beloved of Apol. 50:13, 59-61, as a dramatic oratorical device. Dramatical oratorical device it may have been but its lesson that blood symbolises the life of the individual and that the martyr's sufferings find voice should not be dismissed so blithely.

Instead, the disparity between the "seed" as blood and the "seed" as faith should probably be explained in terms of the perennial tension between abstruse theologising and moral exhortation based on practical experience. The "vocalisation" of blood (which in the person of Abel was, as

likely as not, the soil from which the metaphor sprung) is a sound theological precedent for the "seed" as blood. It is, however, too abstract to have encouraged the faithful and too detached from common experience to have impressed the Church's potential recruits. The "seed" as faith, by contrast, is peculiarly suited to moral exhortation - mirroring as it must have done the practical experience of many converts.

Nevertheless, whether the emphasis is placed upon the martyr's blood or his faith, the metaphor of the "seed" has the virtue of focusing attention upon the pagan onlooker. In the words of Scap. 5:4, 22-26, that onlooker sees the martyr's death ("spectare"), inquires into the meaning of it ("inquirere"), knows the truth ("cognoscere") and then proceeds to adhere to that truth ("sequi"). It is the psychological response of the pagan onlooker which is decisive; the martyr's death is a mere catalyst.

On the surface, such approbation of pagan curiosity (curiosity expressed by the words "contemplare" and "inquirere")<sup>88</sup> might seem to be at variance with Tertullian's condemnation of excessive "curiositas", in Idol. 9:1, 3-12 and Praes. 14:1, 1-14:5, 13. However, this would be a mistake. As Fredouille observes, such a condemnation has as its object not the legitimate curiosity of pagans regarding the Faith but the illegitimate and excessive curiosity of man regarding matters which God has not chosen to reveal to him:

"Il adopte et adapte un point de vue commun, selon lequel l'érudition n'est qu'un moyen et ne doit donc d'aucune manière détourner de l'essentiel: en l'occurrence, la connaissance de Dieu, l'approfondissement de la foi. Il va sans dire que Tertullien condamne par exemple la curiosité pour les sciences occultes: astrologie, pratiques divinatoires, opérations magiques. Ces disciplines, en effet, dans leur principe même, sont mauvaises. Enseignées aux hommes par les anges déchus, elles ne peuvent que les empêcher d'avoir accès à la connaissance de Dieu: 'ce sont là des sciences inventées par les anges rebelles et interdites par Dieu'."<sup>89</sup>

Moreover, in Praes. 10:1, 1-10:5, 10, Tertullian emphasised that Jesus' injunction to His disciples to "seek" in order that they might "find" (Mt. 7:7 and Lk 11:9) warrants men exercising curiosity until they find the Faith:

"Ratio autem dicti huius in tribus articulis constitit, in re, in tempore, in modo. In re ut quid sit quaerendum consideres; in tempore ut quando; in modo ut quousque. Igitur quaerendum est quod Christus instituit utique quamdiu non inuenis, utique donec inuenias. Inuenisti autem cum credidisti. Nam non credidisses si non inuenisses, sicut nec quaesisses nisi ut inuenires. Ad hoc ergo quaerens ut inuenias et ad hoc inueniens ut credas omnem prolationem quaerendi et inueniendi credendo fixisti. Hunc tibi modum statuit fructus ipse quaerendi".

Fredouille was well justified in concluding that "pour Tertullien, profondément influencé comme il l'était par le stoïcisme, la religion nouvelle a d'abord représenté un idéal de perfection morale que son inquiète curiosité l'a poussé à mieux connaître".<sup>90</sup>

To return to Apol. 50:13, 59-50:15,70 and Scap. 5:4, 22-26, by focusing the reader's attention upon the psychological response of the onlooker in this way, Tertullian deflects attention from the martyr. Consideration moves from the seed itself to the type of soil in which it is scattered.

The finest quality seed will perish in pagan ground. Acquainted as he was with the parable of the sower (Resurr. 33:5, 16-21 and Scorp. 11:3, 21-23) he would have been sensitive to these connotations. This preoccupation with the onlooker's response is in marked contrast to the Biblically inspired language of "confession" and "testimony", where attention is directed towards the acknowledgement of Christ made by the martyr and therefore towards the mental disposition not of the onlooker but of the martyr. The difference is not merely academic. It is the difference between deed and the consequences of that deed - a difference which can be highly significant. When applied to Tertullian's theology of witness, this difference of nuance adds depth to that theology.

That Tertullian chose to adopt the metaphor of the "seed" in an apologetic work, the audience of which was ostensibly pagans, is not entirely unexpected. The Biblical foundations of the idea of "confessing" Christ rendered it less effective in works whose professed recipients were pagans, the Christian connotations of the idea being unfamiliar to them. (His apologetic works contain remarkably few direct Biblical quotations).<sup>91</sup> Moreover, as a device for underlining the power of Christian witness over the minds of those who behold it, the metaphor of the "seed" is unrivalled.

Valuable though the metaphor of the "seed" was, however, for Tertullian's witness-orientated theory of martyrdom (constituting as it does the apogee of that theory) the fact

that he employed it twice only, in the course of his expositions of that theme, must raise doubts about the depth of his adhesion to martyrdom as an act of witness. The second occasion upon which he had recourse to the metaphor was also in Apol. - to quote Apol. 21:25, 128-131,

"discipuli uero diffusi per orbem ex praecepto magistri dei paruerunt, qui et ipsi a Iudaeis persequentibus multa perpassi utique pro fiducia ueritatis libenter Romae postremo per Neronis saeuitiam sanguinem Christianum seminauerunt".

Having discovered such an excellent device for describing the impact of the Christian's death upon his pagan neighbours and therefore for explaining to the faithful why martyrdom as witness is such an important duty, why did Tertullian set that device aside? Would a theologian who was absolutely committed to that aspect of martyrdom have denied himself such a valuable tool?

The absence of such imagery in his later discussions of martyrdom (notably in Scap., a work belonging to the same genre and the same audience) cannot be explained in terms of his conversion to Montanism. Tertullian continued to employ the metaphor of the "seed" to elucidate the nature of the resurrection body, in Marc. V. 10:4, 10-10:6, 10 and Resurr. 52:3, 6-52:16, 64 and yet both works were touched by Montanism.<sup>92</sup>

It is not sufficient to dismiss these doubts regarding the depth of Tertullian's adhesion to a witness-orientated martyr theory on the grounds that as his Christianisation increased, he increasingly favoured Biblically inspired language. He may indeed have increasingly favoured



Biblically inspired language but this does not explain why Tertullian, the polemicist par excellence, ignored such an outstanding polemical device as the blood-wrung "seed".

#### 3.2.4 Martyrdom : an antidote to idolatry

"Uirtute enim patimur ex dilectione in deum, et sana mente, cum ob innocentiam patimur. Sed et sicubi tolerantiam praecipit, quibus magis eam quam passionibus prospicit? Sicubi ab idololatria diuellit, quid ei magis quam martyria praeuellit?"

Here, in Scorp. 13:12, 1-5, Tertullian maintains that martyrdom inspires those who witness it to forsake their idolatrous practices. (The actual word employed to describe that process is "diuellere").<sup>93</sup> The result of Tertullian's choice of verb is that he envisaged the pagan as being torn violently away from his attachment to idols. Furthermore, because "diuellere" emphasises the fact that the pagan and the worship of idols are rent asunder, it also emphasises that they were previously intimate. Both these aspects of the verb "diuellere" highlight the traumatic character of conversion. Conversion is not an imperceptible transition; it is a dramatic leap.

Although Tertullian did not use the word "antidote", in Scorp. 13:12, 1-5, the powerful impact of the martyr's death upon those who beheld it justifies the use of such a dramatic term to describe his thought. It is also justified by the juxtaposition of the passage in question with Scorp. 5:10, 14-5:13, 30. There, he describes the fruit from the tree of knowledge as a "poison", the Fall as an "illness" and martyrdom as an "antidote" ("antidotum"):



"Homo semper prior negotium medico facit, denique sibimet ipse periculum mortis attraxit. Acceperat a domino suo ut a medico satis utilem disciplinam secundum legem uiuendi, ut omnia quidem ederet, ab una solummodo arbuscula temperaret, quam ipse medicus inportunam interim nouerat. Audiit ille quem maluit et abstinentiam rupit. Edit illicitum et transgressione saturatus in mortem cruditaui, dignissimus bona fide in totum perire quia uoluit. Sed dominus sustentata feruura delicti, donec tempore medicina temperaretur, paulatim remedia composuit, omnes fidei disciplinas et ipsas aemulas uitio, uerbum mortis uerbo uitae rescindentes, auditum transgressionis auditu deuotionis limantes. Ita, et cum mori praecipit medicus ille, ueternum mortis excludit. Quid grauatur nunc pati homo ex remedio quod non est tunc grauatus pati ex uitio? Displicet occidi in salutem cui non displicuit occidi in perditionem? Nausiabit ad antidotum qui hiauit ad uenenum?"

Whilst it is true that the aforementioned extract envisages martyrdom as an "antidote" which counteracts the poison which the martyr himself has swallowed (not as an "antidote" to the poison which other men have swallowed) it does provide a precedent for the idea of martyrdom as an "antidote" per se. Similarly, whilst it is true that the extract in question describes martyrdom as an "antidote" to the Fall and the Fall and idolatry are not absolutely synonymous, Pat. 5:22, 78-5:24, 88 highlights the fact that, in the eyes of Tertullian, idolatry had its origin in the impatience of Adam and Eve,<sup>94</sup> that is, in the Fall.

Should the act of being "torn asunder" or the act of imbibing an "antidote" be equated with that of giving "testimony"? The question is put in sharper focus by the recognition that although Scorp. 13:12, 1-5 demonstrates that martyrdom and idolatry are antipathetic to each other,

it never explicitly refers to the martyrs bearing witness to the Christ.

Strictly speaking, the idea of being "torn away" from the clutches of idolatry is distinct from that of being "taught" the Faith - as the ransom-orientated theory of the Passion proves,<sup>95</sup> rupture does not necessarily entail the acquisition of knowledge. Nevertheless, when the idea as it is used in Scorp. 13:12, 1-5 is read in context, there is a good case for arguing that the rejoinder should be an affirmative. It does enlist words which suggest that the martyr's blameless suffering and courageous endurance had a part to play in the defeat of idolatry - the martyr is characterised by his strength ("uirtus") and his endurance ("tolerantia").<sup>96</sup> The martyr suffers for the sake of God ("patimur ex dilectione in deum")<sup>97</sup>, he suffers for no crime ("cum ob innocentiam patimur").<sup>98</sup> It is probably significant that one of the words employed by Tertullian in Scorp. 13:12, 3, is also to be found in Scap. 5:4, 24 (an excerpt where the didactic qualities of martyrdom are explicit) - the word "tolerantia". If he believed that the "endurance" of the martyrs wins converts to the Faith when he wrote Scap. 5:4, 22-26, might he not have had a comparable process of witness through endurance in mind earlier when he wrote Scorp. 13:12, 1-5? In support of this conclusion, I would cite Apol. 50:15, 65 where Tertullian adduces the "obstinatio" of the martyrs as the quality which attracts converts to the Faith.

An examination of the sentence immediately preceding Scorp. 13:12, 1-5 confirms this interpretation. Admonishing his readers not to be ashamed of the testimony given by Christ, Tertullian quoted 2 Tim. 1:7-8. Moreover, as Scorp. 13:11, 26-13:11, 1 makes clear, he recognised that if that testimony is to be emulated the Christian will require the Spirit of love and power - the very qualities to which he alluded in Scorp. 13:12, 1-3:

"'Ne ergo confundaris martyrium domini nostri, neque me uinctum eius'; quia praedixerat: 'non enim dedit nobis deus spiritum timoris, sed uirtutis et dilectionis et sanae mentis'".  
(Scorp. 13:11, 26-13:11, 1).

Scorp. may have had as its primary concern the sustaining of the weaker brethren against the onslaughts of the Gnostics but its author had not lost sight of the Church's ultimate goal - that is, the conversion of the world.

Had Tertullian chosen to employ overtly witness-orientated vocabulary in Scorp. 13:12, 1-5, that aspect of his message might have come across more strongly but if in the process he had abandoned the verb "diuellere", another aspect of his message might have been lost - that is, that conversion inspired by witnessing the deaths of the martyrs is a traumatic event. Therefore, his failure to specifically state that the martyrs are witnesses, in Scorp. 13:12, 1-5, probably does not have much bearing on the extent to which the idea of witness was or was not at the heart of his theology of martyrdom.

### 3.2.5 The martyr - the heir of the prophets?

"The idea that a prophet may suffer for his beliefs or actions is implicit in earlier biblical writings, describing the fate of Micaiah, Uriah, Elijah, Amos, Jeremiah and others. No matter whom the author of the songs on the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah had in mind, he held that the great prophet had to suffer or die in his mission".<sup>99</sup>

As F.A. Fishel appreciates, the association of the prophet with suffering goes back to the Old Testament. Nonetheless, as he observes, it was the trauma of the nationalistic revolts (from the age of Judas Maccabaeus through to that of Rabbi Akiba) which finally produced the identification of the prophet with the martyr in Jewish thought.<sup>100</sup> From that period onwards the idea became entrenched there:

"As early as the first century C.E. it had become a generally accepted teaching of Judaism that prophets had to suffer or even to undergo martyrdom."<sup>101</sup>

Fishel goes further. Within post-Temple Judaism, the martyr increasingly became a prophet:

"Not only was every prophet believed to be a martyr, but far-reaching progress had also been made towards the idea that every martyr was a prophet".<sup>102</sup>

The martyrs' endowment with prophetic powers was merely the logical corollary of the idea that "every moriturus was believed to have visions".<sup>103</sup>

In the light of the Jewish tradition of the martyred prophet (a tradition which is reproduced in the New Testament),<sup>104</sup> it seems pertinent to ask whether or not Tertullian regarded

the Christian martyrs as the heirs of the Old Testament prophets.

He certainly quoted many of the New Testament texts in which the sufferings of the prophets were recorded - texts such as, Mt. 5:12, 21:34-36, 23:37, Lk. 13:34, Acts 7:52 and I Thess. 2:15.<sup>105</sup>

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you."  
(Lk. 13:34).

Taken in isolation, however, such citations do not prove that he saw the Old Testament prophets as exemplars for the faithful. He could have considered that the prophets were too special for such a role - a group set apart from ordinary men.

Similarly, Tertullian recognised that Christ, the ultimate Priest and the supreme King,<sup>106</sup> is also the foremost Prophet,<sup>107</sup> thereby supplying a premise upon which a theory in which the martyr is the heir to Christ's prophetic calling could have been built.

At first sight, however, the evidence for the identification of the Tertullianic martyr with the Old Testament prophet appears unpromising. When employing the New Testament verses which allude to the sufferings of the prophets, Tertullian frequently applied them in contexts far removed from martyrdom. Under half of the eight passages draw the parallel between the Christian and the prophet; they are Pat. 11:9, 32-37, Scorp. 9:2, 19-26 and Iud. 13:19, 110-13:20, 115.

Resurr. 26:13, 51-54 enlists either Mt. 23:37 or Lk. 13:34 as corroboration of the fact that the Jews' faithlessness to their God has caused them to be excluded from the heavenly patrimony -

"qui enim in eam Hierusalem uoces eiusmodi competent exhortationis et aduocationis, quae occidit prophetas et lapidauit missos ad se et ipsum postremo dominum suum confecit?"

Prax. 26:9, 49-51 employs Mt. 21:34-36 in order to demonstrate the distinction between the First and Second Persons of the Trinity -

"inducens (Christ) parabolam filii, non patris, in uineam missi post aliquot seruos et occisi a malis rusticis et a patre defensi".

Carn. 14:4, 24-32 cites the same verses to support the affirmation that the Son truly became Incarnate.

Likewise, Tertullian's allusions to Christ as the supreme Prophet do not encourage the view that the Tertullianic martyr was one with the Old Testament prophet. Located outwith his theology of martyrdom, they are designed to prove that Christ was the fulfilment and indeed the culmination of Old Testament prophecy, not that He serves as an example of the witness to His disciples. Thus, Marc. IV. 18:4, 13-18 observes -

"ipso iam domino uirtutum, sermone et spiritu patris, operante in terris et praedicante necesse erat portionem spiritus sancti, quae ex forma prophetici moduli in Iohanne egerat praeparaturam uiarum dominicarum, abscedere iam ab Iohanne, redactam scilicet in dominum ut in massalem suam summam".



Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that Tertullian did regard the martyr as the heir of the prophet. He was adamant that the Christian is committed to bearing "witness" to his Lord; it was in "witnessing" to his God that the essence of the prophet's mission had lain.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, he was confident that the Christian has been invested in his own generation with the office of the prophet of yesteryear - in the words of Iud. 13:19, 110-13:20, 115:

"Nobis scilicet, qui successimus in loco prophetarum, ea sustinentes hodie in saeculo, quae semper passi sunt prophetae propter diuinam religionem. Alios enim lapidauerunt, alios fugauerunt, plures uero ad necem tradiderunt, quod negare non possunt".

He was also mindful of the fact that the Christian's inheritance of the prophet's mission also entailed the inheritance of the prophet's fate - that is, martyrdom. To quote Scorp. 9:2, 19-26:

"Hoc quidem absolute ad omnes; dehinc proprie ad apostolis ipsos: beati eritis, cum uos dedecorauerint et persecuti fuerint et dixerint aduersus uos omnia mala propter me: gaudete et exultate, quoniam merces uestra plurima in caelo: sic enim faciebant et prophetis patres illorum: ut etiam prophetaret, quod et ipsi occidi haberent ad exemplum prophetarum".

It is no coincidence that this excerpt stands at the head of a chapter in which the Christians' duty to "confess" their Lord is laid down in no uncertain terms.<sup>109</sup> The prophets had been persecuted; the Christians are persecuted. According to Tertullian, the one fact followed on inevitably from the other.



Thus, his decision to enrol such figures as Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah amongst the forebears of the Carthaginian martyrs was not haphazard. It was a deliberate decision; a decision made in the light of his acquaintance with the tradition of the martyred prophet. Scorp. 8:2, 25-8:3, 4 declares:

"A primordio enim iustitia uim patitur. Statim ut coli deus coepit, inuidiam religio sortita est. Qui deo placuerat, occiditur, et quidem a fratre. Quo procliuius impietas alienum sanguinem insectaretur, a suo auspicata in sectata est denique non modo iustorum, uerum etiam et prophetarum. Dauid exagitur, Helias fugatur, Hieremias lapidatur, Ezeias secatur, Zacharias inter altare et aedem trucidatur perennes cruoris sui maculas silicibus assignans".

I grant that the main thrust of Scorp. 8:3, 25-8:3, 4 is not simply that the prophets have been continually persecuted but that the righteous have always been subjected to persecution.<sup>110</sup> The righteous being a wider category than the prophets, there is a distinction. Nonetheless, it is surely significant that Tertullian picked out the prophets for special mention.

Although he regarded the prophets as a group entitled to exceptional honour, in the eyes of the faithful ("denique non modo iustorum, uerum etiam et prophetarum")<sup>111</sup> he was not above exploiting their names in order to inspire his Carthaginian brethren to emulate their sufferings - a fact which Pétré demonstrates in his study of Tertullian's use of "exempla".<sup>112</sup>

Finally, although Mart. 2:8, 31-2:8, 2 does not specifically allude to the martyr's death, it directly associates the imprisoned confessor and the prophet:

"Hoc praestat carcer Christiano, quod eremus prophetis. Ipse dominus in secessu frequentius agebat, ut liberius oraret, ut saeculo cederet. Gloriam denique suam discipulis in solitudine demonstravit. Auferamus carceris nomen, secessum uocemus."

If this evidence is to be accorded its proper weight, however, several factors must be taken into account. Firstly, although Scorp. 15:1, 2-15:4, 15<sup>113</sup> bears a marked affinity with Scorp. 8:3, 25-8:3, 4 (the example of the prophets being replaced by that of such figures as Stephen, Peter and Paul) the latter passage has no direct parallel elsewhere in Tertullian's works. Moreover, he explicitly associated the martyrs with the prophets a mere four times (although Pat. 11:9, 32-37 alludes to Mt. 5:12, it does not employ the word "prophet").

Secondly, complying with Mt. 5:10 and Lk. 6:23, Tertullian did not confine his association of the martyr's death with the world's hatred of righteousness to Scorp. 8: 2, 25-8:3, 1. It also appears in such passages as Scorp. 8:4, 6-8:6, 26, 9:1, 17-19 and Fug. 7:1, 13-15. The "righteous" is not a synonym for the martyr-prophet.

Thirdly, he did not simply cast the prophets in the role of forebears of the martyrs; he also so cast the apostles. Thus, in Apol. 21:25, 128-131, he states -

"discipuli uero diffusi per orbem ex praecepto magistri dei paruerunt, qui et ipsi a Iudaeis persequentibus multa perpassi utique pro fiducia ueritatis libenter Romae postremo per Neronis saeuitiam sanguinem Christianum seminauerunt."

(Although the apostles as Spirit inspired witnesses and martyrs<sup>114</sup> were themselves heirs to the prophets, this does indicate that Tertullian was not so committed to the prophetic analogy that he was oblivious to the virtues of other analogies).

Fourthly, he disregarded several Biblical verses which might have added depth to a witness-orientated theory of martyrdom, notably, Mt. 13:57 and Jn. 5:10<sup>115</sup>. In the former, the prophet (like the martyr after him) is "without honour" in his own country. In the latter, the prophet is extolled as an "example of suffering and patience".

Fifthly, Tertullian did not exploit the fact that the prophet had been traditionally regarded as the recipient of visions and the mouthpiece of warnings. For all that he was endowed with the Holy Spirit,<sup>116</sup> like his prophetic forefather, the Tertullianic martyr was not automatically endowed with visions or other supernatural experiences. Although Tertullian accepted and recounted the visions experienced by Saturus (albeit he ascribed them mistakenly to Perpetua)<sup>117</sup> Anim. 55:4, 32-35 and Mart. 2:9, 2-2:10, 10 are the only occasions upon which he depicted the martyr as being subject to visions.

This silence is surprising. It cannot be explained simply in terms of the timing of Tertullian's conversion to Montanism. If Scorp. and Iud. (like Mart.) date from his

Catholic period, Fug., Monog. and Pud. (like Anim.) date from his Montanist period. Yet, unlike Mart. and Anim., they are silent about the martyr's spiritual gifts. Probably he felt that there was a danger of appearing to dictate to the Spirit when and how He must work. It is extremely unlikely, however, that the Montanist Tertullian excluded the possibility of martyrs' possessing the gift of visions and foreknowledge. Since Montanists regarded themselves as peculiarly endowed by the Spirit,<sup>118</sup> Montanist martyrs (at very least) ought to have been so endowed.

Sixthly, in those extracts where he did set the Old Testament prophet alongside the Christian martyr, he emphasised the death of the prophet rather than his role as a witness. When any reference to the Old Testament prophet is made, such a role is, of course, implicit. Nevertheless, the martyr's duty to bear testimony to his Lord would have been underlined if Tertullian had made the witnessing dimension of the prophet's death explicit.

In short, therefore, whilst Tertullian included the prophets amongst the forefathers of the martyrs and appreciated their value as devices with which to urge the faithful to offer up their lives to God, he was not so firmly attached to the prophetic motif as to employ it to the exclusion of others or to incorporate all the apposite implications of that motif in his martyr theology. Moreover, whilst the prophets were the forebears of the Tertullianic martyr, the death of that martyr was not the death of a prophet.

For any witness-orientated theory of martyrdom, the motif of the Old Testament prophet is ideal. As M. Lods has observed:

"Ainsi, de même que le prophète d'Israël prononce les oracles de Dieu et meurt par fidélité à sa foi, de même le prophète chrétien présente deux caractères: il parle de Jésus Christ et il meurt martyr de Jésus Christ."<sup>119</sup>

Tertullian's failure to exploit the possibilities of that motif to the full must raise doubts about the extent to which his theory of martyrdom conforms to the traditional view of martyrdom, propounded by historians of the early Church<sup>120</sup> - the view according to which "confession" of Christ holds centre stage.

### 3.2.6 The martyr - the heir to the divine Witnesses?

In the New Testament, both the Father and the Son are depicted as Witnesses - the former in such verses as Jn. 5:31-39, 8:13-20 and Heb. 2:4, the latter in such verses as Jn. 3:11, 18:37 and Rev. 3:14. Therefore, given that Tertullian was familiar with the "imitatio Christi" motif, the motif according to which man is encouraged to reproduce many of the salient characteristics of his God, might he not have envisaged the martyr as the heir to the divine vocation of witness?

An examination of his works, however, reveals that such a juxtaposition of the witness of God and that of the martyr is totally absent. Although he did occasionally use the vocabulary of "testimony" with reference to the Father ("testis", "testimonium" and "testari")<sup>121</sup> he never did so

within his martyr theology. Prax. 21:13, 68-71, where he cited the testimony offered by the Father to the Son, is representative -

"'ego autem habeo maius quam Iohannis testimonium; opera enim, quae pater mihi dedit consummare, illa ipsa de me testimonium perhibent, quod me pater miserit; et qui me misit pater, ipse testimonium dixit de me'".

This failure to exploit the Father's role as a Witness is all the more striking when excerpts such as Anim. 51:6, 32-51:7, 42 and Scap. 3:2, 5-3:3,12 are examined:

"Scio feminam quandam uernaculam ecclesiae, forma et aetate integra functam, post unicum et breue matrimonium cum in pace dormisset et morante adhuc sepultura interim oratione presbyteri componeretur, ad primum halitum orationis manus a lateribus dimotas in habitum supplicem conformasse rursumque condita pace situi suo reddidisse. Est et illa relatio apud nostros, in coemeterio corpus corpori iuxta collocando spatium accessui communicasse. Si et apud ethnicos tale quid traditur, ubique deus potestatis suae signa proponit, suis in solacium, extraneis in testimonium"  
(Anim. 51:6, 32-51:7, 42)

and

"Ceterum et imbres anni praeteriti quid commemorauerint genus humanum apparuit, cataclysmum scilicet et retro fuisse propter incredulitates et iniquitates hominum; et ignes qui super moenia Carthaginis proxime pependerunt per noctem, quid minati sint, sciunt qui uiderunt; et pristina tonitrua quid sonuerint, sciunt qui obduruerunt. Omnia haec signa sunt imminentis irae dei".  
(Scap. 3:2, 5-3:3, 12).

Since the Father (like the martyr) offers testimony which is designed to cause mankind to mend its ways, would it not have been reasonable for Tertullian to have reinforced his



teaching on the Christians' duty to confess Christ by reminding them that their God performs a similar function?

Similarly, although he did enlist within his general theology Biblical verses where Jesus is depicted as a great religious Teacher - notably, Isa. 11:1-5, 42:6-8, Mt. 11:9, Lk. 7:16, 7:26, Jn. 1:9, 1:14, 8:31-32, 14:6, I Tim. 6:13 and Rev. 3:14<sup>122</sup> - he never did so within his martyr theology. In its concentration upon the Person of Christ, Marc. III. 17:3, 22-26 is typical -

"si enim plenitudo in illo spiritus constitit, agnosco uirgam de radice Iesse: flos eius meus erit Christus, in quo requieuit secundum Esaiam 'spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii et uigoris, spiritus agnitionis et pietatis, spiritus timoris dei'."

Tertullian's application of the language of "testimony" to the mission of Christ ("confessio", "testimonium" and "testari")<sup>123</sup> also stands outwith his theology of martyrdom.

It is in his interaction with such verses as I Tim. 6:13, however, that the significance of his failure to exploit the motif of Christ the Witness comes to the fore. Referring as it does to the "good confession" evidenced by Jesus before Pilate, I Tim. 6:13 would seem to present the moral theologian with an archetype for the death of the martyr. Yet, in Praes. 25:2, 4-25:6, 17 (the sole occasion upon which he alluded to the text) Tertullian employed it to prove that Jesus had not left behind Him a secret deposit of doctrine which was for the ears of Gnostics alone:

"Quaedam enim palam et uniuersis, quaedam secreto et paucis demandasse quia et hoc uerbo usus est Paulus ad Timotheum: 'o Timothee, depositum



custodi', et rursum: 'bonum depositum serua'. Quod hoc depositum est? Tacitum ut alterius doctrinae deputetur? An illius denuntiationis de qua ait: 'hanc denuntiationem commendo apud te, filiolo Timothee'? Item illius praecepti de quo ait: 'denuntio tibi ante deum, qui uiuificat omnia et Iesum Christum, qui testatus est sub Pontio Pilato bonam confessionem, custodias praeceptum'? Quod autem praeceptum et quae denuntiatio? Ex supra et infra scriptis intellegere erat, non nescio quid subostendi hoc dicto de remotiore doctrina sed potius inculcari de non admittenda alia praeter eam quam audierat ab ipso et puto 'coram multis', inquit, 'testibus'."

Likewise, Jn. 18:37 with its assertion that Jesus came into the world "to bear witness to the truth" is absent even from Tertullian's general theology.<sup>124</sup> As for his only application of Rev. 3:14, Paen. 8:1, 5-6<sup>125</sup> makes no reference to the fact that Jesus is the "true and faithful witness". If Tertullian had been engrossed by the martyr's role as a witness to mankind would he have ignored such excellent opportunities to call to mind the fact that the faithful's Master had already trodden that path before them?

The closest which he came to drawing an analogy between Jesus as Witness and the martyr as witness was when he depicted both Jesus and the Christian as a light which dispels darkness and as a testimony which dispels ignorance. By juxtaposing Marc. III. 20:4, 22-20:5, 5 alongside either Fug. 9:2, 12-19 or Cult. II. 13:1, 4-10, it is possible to demonstrate that Tertullian possessed the theological foundations upon which a theory of Christ as the archetype for the martyr's witness could have been built. What is more, given that Cult. II. 13:1, 4-10 stands at the head of the chapter in which he declared that the angels are already waiting for the faithful with the "stoles of martyrdom" and

in which he concluded that those women who deck themselves with the "silk of probity" and the "linen of holiness" will have God as their "Lover", it is possible to demonstrate that, on both occasions, he placed the equation of the Christian as light and as testimony in close proximity to allusions to martyrdom. Nevertheless, any analogy between Jesus as light and as testimony and the Christian as those qualities depends upon the juxtaposition of passages from works which may have each been separated from Marc. by as many as six years; it does not appear in a single work.

Whilst it is true that Tertullian was not the only early Church Father who failed to exploit the potential of I Tim. 6:13 for martyr theology (other such Fathers include Origen, Cyprian and Irenaeus)<sup>126</sup> his failure to do so when taken along with his failure to exploit the other potential parallels between human witnessing and divine witnessing is an indication that Tertullian's theory of martyrdom as an act of witness had its limitations. Eusebius in Ekk. Hist. V 1:29, 24-1:31, 7 by contrast, illustrates the way in which Jesus, the Supreme Witness, could be integrated in a witness-orientated theory of martyrdom.

3.2.7 Martyrdom as witness - by whom and to whom was the witness given?

"Etiam plures efficimur, quotiens metimur a uobis:  
semen est sanguis Christianorum!"

At first sight, the donor of the martyr's act of witness and its recipient seem self-evident. It is given by one man to

his fellow men. The pagan bystander, who has no difficulty in ignoring the strident calls of his fellow men, may find it harder to set aside the doubts and queries which beset him from the soft, small voice within. Upon closer examination, however, the question of the donor and the recipient of the martyr's witness is far more complex.

Martyrdom may be an act which is performed by man but it is also an act which is performed by God. In the words of Prax. 29:7, 45-48 and Fug. 14:3, 20-24, when the martyr gives his testimony, the Holy Spirit will grant him the necessary words:

"Quin hoc retractatum, nec quisquam negabit, quando nec nos pati pro deo possumus nisi spiritus dei sit in nobis qui et loquitur de nobis quae sunt confessionis, non ipse tamen patiens sed pati posse praestans"  
(Prax. 29:7, 45-48)

and

"Et ideo paracletus necessarius, deductor omnium ueritatum, exhortator omnium tolerantiarum. Quem qui receperunt, neque fugere persecutionem neque redimere nouerunt, habentes ipsum, qui pro nobis erit, sicut locuturus in interrogatione, ita iuuaturus in passione."  
(Fug. 14:3, 20-24).

Thus, for Tertullian, Mt. 10:19-20 is not simply a promise that God will confer upon the martyr the power to endure intense anguish. To quote the Holy Spirit, "pati posse praestans"<sup>127</sup> and "exhortator omnium tolerantiarum".<sup>128</sup> It is not even simply a promise that God will confer upon the martyr the courage to find the appropriate words. It is a promise that God will grant the martyr the very words with

which to make his confession of faith. To quote, the Holy Spirit "loquitur de nobis quae sunt confessionis"<sup>129</sup> and "sicut locuturus in interrogatione".<sup>130</sup> The key word in both passages is "loqui"; the Holy Spirit "speaks".

There is a sense in which the simultaneous offering of testimony by God and man within the one act of witness is a contradiction in terms. Tertullian did not, however, perceive the contradiction. Indeed, since both angles had Biblical authority<sup>131</sup> and the Bible never lied<sup>132</sup>, there could be no contradiction.

Had he been challenged to find a logical reconciliation of martyrdom as a simultaneous act of God and man, he would probably have cited the harmonious, yet distinct contributions of God and man in Christian charismatic experiences.

The Montanist Tertullian believed that whilst the prophetic gift is being exercised, the soul of the individual concerned is passive. In the words of Marc. V. 8:12, 22, "in ecstasi, id est in amentia". Indeed he went so far as to compare the temporary state of the prophet's soul to the permanent condition of the madman - "hanc uim ecstasin dicimus, excessum sensus et amentiae instar"<sup>133</sup>. C.M. Robeck declares:

"He (Tertullian) argued that when a person was infused with this spiritual quality ('spiritalem uim, qua constat prophetia amentia') that person necessarily lost a certain amount of sensation. That person appeared, at least externally, to resemble a madman for he stood outside his senses. Tertullian understood this to be absolutely

essential, for that person had been overcome by God's power."<sup>134</sup>

The result of inspiration by the Spirit<sup>135</sup>, prophecy is primarily the work of God; the prophet's words and visions are not his own.

Nevertheless, throughout ecstasy, it was the human flesh which is the vehicle of the Holy Spirit. The human mind receives the imprint of the vision. To quote Anim. 45:6, 28-30,

"igitur quod memoria suppetit, sanitas mentis est; quod sanitas mentis salua memoria stupeat, amentiae genus est".

The human voice describes the vision.

For the author of Anim. 45:5, 23-27, memory is an integral part of the ecstatic condition.<sup>136</sup> Robeck concludes:

"Since dreams, or visions, or prophecies were produced by an external force (ecstasi), he argued, the soul was without mastery over these things. Yet the ecstatic condition brought with itself memory. It was at this point that Tertullian argued most strongly for one's total mental capacity even in the ecstatic condition. In his own words he noted, 'that ... which the memory supplies is a sound mind; and that which a sound mind (ecstatically) experiences while the memory remains unchecked, is a kind of madness'.<sup>137</sup>

The prophet's mental agitation does not involve annihilation of his mental processes.<sup>138</sup> The reception of the vision by the prophet's memory means, however, that in a qualified manner, prophecy is also the work of man; overpowered though he is by God's Spirit, man enunciates the divine message.

A similar process occurred in the case of the inspiration of the Bible. The message came from God but the hands of the human writers were the tools of its divine author.<sup>139</sup>

Applied to martyrdom, this means that the Holy Spirit operates through the martyr's human flesh. When he confesses Christ, it is his human voice which utters the words of God and his human tongue which enunciates them.

Implicit with such a view of martyrdom is the danger that the contribution of the Spirit will overshadow that of the man. Because he was clear that the assistance promised by Mt. 10:19-20 is a promise to those who genuinely desire to confess Jesus with courage and fortitude, not to all Christians regardless of their intentions, Tertullian's exposition of martyrdom as an act of witness by God avoids this danger. The key word in Prax. 29:7, 45-48 is "posse". The Holy Spirit does not make the martyr 'desire to suffer'; He makes him 'able' to suffer.

If there is a certain ambiguity regarding the donor of Tertullianic testimony, there is also ambiguity regarding the recipient of that testimony. Despite the apparently clear message of extracts such as, Apol. 50:13, 59-50:15, 70 and Scap. 5:4, 22-26 where the Christian testifies to his fellow men, there are in Tertullian's works several factors which suggest that martyrdom was an act of witness given to God too. This does not mean that the martyr "taught" God something about the depth of his faith which He did not already know, for as Marc. II 5:3, 24-26 and II 7:1, 10-7:5,



18 recognised, God is omniscient. What it does mean is that the martyr formally and indeed publicly showed forth the quality of his personal faith and offered up that faith to his God.<sup>140</sup>

It was to God that the blood of Abel had "cried out" - not to man. Thus, in Marc. II.25:3, 14-24, Tertullian observes that God asked Cain about his brother's whereabouts in order that, by denying his crime, he might compound his guilt. He did not do so because He was ignorant of Cain's crime. Given that the death of Abel was depicted as an epitome of that of the martyr, in Scorp. 8:2, 25-8:3, 28, might Tertullian not have reasonably concluded that the blood of the martyr cried out to the Almighty too?

Then there are the passages where Tertullian enlisting Mt. 10:32-33, encouraged the faithful to believe that their acknowledgement of Christ will result in their acknowledgement by Christ. If God responds to the anguish endured by the martyr, He must have seen that anguish. Although being seen and intending to be seen are not necessarily the same thing, the prominence accorded to Mt. 10:32-33, in Tertullian's martyr theology, means that his readers might reasonably have expected and indeed intended their sacrifice to be seen by God.

Before citing Mt. 10:32-33, in Scorp. 9:8, 11-17, he reminded the faithful that their God is the God who is cognisant of the death of even the apparently insignificant sparrow. To quote Scorp. 9:7, 4-9:8, 11:



"Quis etiam animae dominator, nisi deus solus? Quis iste ignium comminator, nisi is, sine cuius uoluntate nec passerum alter in terram cadit, id est nec altera ex duabus substantiis hominis, caro aut anima? Quia et capillorum apud eum regestus est numerus. Nolite ergo metuere, cum insuper dicit, multis passeribus antistatis, non frustra, id est non sine emolumento casuros in terram repromittit, si magis ab hominibus quam a deo occidi deligamus."

If the Almighty is cognisant of the death of a sparrow,<sup>141</sup> how much more so will He be of the witness which Christians make to Him before mankind.

In theory, it may be true that genuine confession of Christ ought to be totally selfless and disinterested. In practice, however, it is not uncommon for fallen humanity to feel encouraged to perform a difficult task because of the hope of reward. Moreover, an examination of Tertullian's exhortatory techniques reveals that he was swift to capitalise upon the faithful's longing to attain heavenly rewards. Scorp. 6:11, 14-18 reminds them that martyrdom washes away sin:

"Sic dilectio operit multitudinem peccatorum, quae deum scilicet diligens ex totis uiribus suis, quibus in martyrio decertat, ex tota anima sua, quam pro deo ponit, hominem martyrem excudit."

Scorp. 12:8, 15-17 and 12:9, 19-21 holds before them a dazzling prospect - the prospect that the martyr will win life eternal and citizenship of the New Jerusalem:

"Exinde uictoribus quibusque promittit nunc arborem uitae et mortis ueniam secundae, nunc latens manna cum calculo candido et nomine ignoto ... nunc albam uestiri nec deleri de libro uitae et columnam fieri in dei templo in nomine dei et domini et Hierusalem caelestis inscriptam."

The link between confession and reward is made explicit in Scorp. 11:1, 6-11:2, 14 and Fug. 7:1, 9-15; the true witness will win salvation.

If the martyr hopes to be rewarded for his sufferings in eternity<sup>142</sup>, he must believe that the Almighty is cognisant of those sufferings. If the martyr's sufferings induce God to remit his transgressions,<sup>143</sup> those sufferings must be directed towards the Almighty, for He alone can remit sin.<sup>144</sup> Thus, whilst it is true that Scorp. 8:2, 25-8:3, 28 does not overtly allude to the "vocalisation" of blood when setting the example of Abel before his readers and Scorp. 9:8, 11-17 confirms that confession of Jesus must be made before men in this life (not before God in a future life) there is a real sense in which Tertullianic witness is an act directed towards God. (This interpretation of the phrase "confession before men" is confirmed by Scorp. 10:8, 24-10:17, 4).

How can martyrdom as an act of witness to God be reconciled with the concept of martyrdom which depicts martyrdom as an act of witness performed by God? Whereas witnessing to God and witnessing to man are capable of rational reconciliation (as the simultaneous, yet divergent consequences of one action), witnessing to God and witnessing by God can be reconciled only by virtue of a leap of faith - faith in the God who, in the Person of Christ Jesus, became the victim at Calvary and, in the Person of the Father, became the recipient of that sacrifice.<sup>145</sup> Such a God might well

demand the martyr's testimony and then grant the power to fulfil that demand.

An act of witness to both God and men, martyrdom was also an act of witness against an idolatrous society. Orat. 5:3, 12-15 declares:

"Clamant ad dominum invidia animae martyrum sub altari: 'quonam usque non ulcisceris, domine, sanguinem nostrum de incolis terrae?' Nam utique ultio illorum a saeculi fine dirigitur."

Whilst the primary focus of attention in this excerpt is upon the eternal chastisement which the persecutors of the martyr face, the underlying implication is that for those who refuse to heed his testimony, the martyr's death will be a source of incrimination and condemnation. The key words appear in Orat. 5:3, 13-14; they are the words "sanguis" and "ulcisci". Because God will "avenge" the martyr's death, his persecutors are incriminated by that death. Moreover, although Orat. 5:3, 13-14 constitutes a direct citation of Rev. 6:10, Apol. 50:13, 59-61 (which was composed a few years before Orat.) underlines the fact that, in the eyes of Tertullian, the martyr's shedding of his "blood" and his offering of testimony are one and the same.

Such witness against an idolatrous society is in accordance with our Lord's command to His disciples that where their message is rejected, they should shake from their feet the very dust of that town.<sup>146</sup> Marc. IV. 21:1, 6-21:2, 9 unhesitatingly interpreted that gesture in terms of

impending judgement; by rejecting the Messiah, the townsfolk have incriminated themselves:

"At cum iubet puluerem excutere de pedibus in eos, a quibus excepti non fuissent, et hoc in testimonium mandat fieri. Nemo testatur quod non iudicio destinatur: inhumanitatem qui in testationem redigi iubet iudicem comminatur". (Marc. IV. 21:1, 6-21:2, 9).

A similar picture emerges from Iud. 9:18, 124-127, where the two-edged sword of Scripture symbolises the two Testaments and renders to each man his just deserts.

The reconciliation of martyrdom as witnessing to mankind and martyrdom as witnessing against an idolatrous society is relatively straightforward. Although it would be a mistake to confuse witnessing against men with the common evangelistic technique of witnessing to men - by means of enumerating their transgressions - there is a sense in which witnessing against a person is the natural culmination of failing to witness successfully to that person. Born of exasperation on the part of man, it is on the part of God a response born of outraged righteousness.

Similarly, martyrdom as an act of witnessing by God and martyrdom as an act of witness against an idolatrous society can be harmonised. Not merely is warning men to eschew idolatry an integral part of the Father's own calling as a witness, the condemnation of sin is a natural consequence of His righteousness. As for the martyr's witness to God and his witness against an idolatrous society, they (like his witness to God and to men) are the simultaneous, yet divergent consequences of one action.

There is even a sense in which martyrdom is an act of witness against the Devil. Within Tertullianic demonology, the Devil is the fountain from which all error springs - to quote Test. 3:2, 9-10, "totius erroris artificem, totius saeculi interpolatorem". Paen. 7:9, 29-34 emphasises that one of the principal ploys of the Devil is to attempt to subvert the faith of the prospective martyr by instilling within him fear of the earthly powers against which he must stand out.

Since Satan desires the faithful to be overcome by fear of the earthly powers, what more effective weapon against him can the martyrs adopt than courage in the face of those same powers? Such courage can result in one thing only - a stalwart confession of Christ.

In contrast to martyrdom as witness against an idolatrous society, however, the martyr's witness against the Devil does not simply compound his guilt in the eyes of God. It also defeats his nefarious purpose.

To conclude, in Tertullian's theory of martyrdom, the role played by testimony is a complex one. Whilst the testimony which is given by the martyr to his fellow men and the testimony which is given by God do accord well with the fundamental requirement of martyrdom as witness (that is, that it should constitute a teaching medium) the other dimensions of martyrdom as witness do not.

Any suggestion that the omniscient God learns something from the martyr's death would verge on sacrilege. Martyrdom can only offer to the Almighty formally that which He already knew to exist - the martyr's love. By the criterion of a teaching medium, the martyr's witness against the Devil also fails. The Devil does not reform because of the martyr's death; he is merely defeated and condemned by virtue of it.

As for witnessing against man, it does not possess the positive connotations which witnessing to the Gospel possesses. The pagan die-hard felt no portent of the punishment which awaited him in eternity, therefore there was no chance that such a portent would frighten him into changing his ways.

The broad range of connotations with which Tertullianic "witness" was endowed means that it would be a mistake to conclude too swiftly that the concept of "teaching" was the most important element within Tertullian's martyr theory. Even when employing the concept of witness itself, he did not propound a "monolithic" theory of death as a teaching medium.

### 3.3 Martyrdom as a seal upon Church doctrine

"Ista quam felix ecclesia cui totam doctrinam apostoli cum sanguine suo profuderunt, ubi Petrus passioni dominicae adaequatur, ubi Paulus Iohannis exitu coronatur, ubi apostolus Iohannes posteaquam in oleum igneum demersus nihil passus est, in insulam relegatur; uideamus quid didicerit, quid docuerit: cum Africanis quoque ecclesiis contesseratis, unum deum dominum nouit, creatorem uniuersitatis, et Christum Iesum ex uirgine Maria



filium dei creatoris, et carnis resurrectionem, legem et prophetas cum euangelicis et apostolicis litteris miscet, inde potat fidem; eam aqua signat, sancto spiritu uestit, eucharistia pascit, martyrium exhorbatur et ita aduersus hanc institutionem neminem recipit."

Here, in Praes. 36:3, 9-36:5, 21, Tertullian deliberately set the Roman Church's unflinching fidelity to an orthodox understanding of God and the Incarnation alongside the fact that that Church produces a plentiful supply of martyrs. A similar picture emerges in Prax. 13:8, 61-66, Praes. 4:5, 15-16 and Ieiun. 12:3, 27-12:3, 9, where he assumed that the doctrinally orthodox alone will be granted the courage necessary to aspire to martyrdom.

From the assumption that orthodoxy promotes martyrdom and heresy promotes apostasy, it is just a short step to the conclusion that the martyrs' deaths set a seal upon the Church's teaching. The reasoning runs as follows. Only Truth has the power to inspire men to undergo such appalling agonies as those to which the martyrs submit themselves. Therefore, their deaths must authenticate the beliefs for which they die.

Implicit within Praes. 36:3, 9-36:5, 21, Praes. 29:2, 2-29:3, 8 exhibits this reasoning explicitly (albeit its message is heavily cloaked in irony):

"Aliquos Marcionitas et Valentinianos liberanda ueritas expectabat. Interea perperam euangelizabatur, perperam credebatur, tot milia milium perperam tincta, tot opera fidei perperam ministrata, tot uirtutes, tot charismata perperam operata, tot sacerdotia, tot ministeria perperam functa, tot denique martyria perperam coronata."



Passages such as Praes. 29:2, 2-29:3, 8 and 36:3, 9-36:5, 21 require a particular epistemology - an epistemology in which God is the source of all Truth and the Devil is the source of all falsehood. Tertullian provided the appropriate epistemological underpinning.

By citing such texts as Jn. 14:16-17, 14:26, 15:26 and 16:13,<sup>147</sup> he proclaimed that the Holy Spirit is the Guide to Truth. By citing such texts as Mt. 13:24-30, I Jn. 2:18-24, 4:1-6, Rev. 12:9 and 20:3,<sup>148</sup> he proclaimed that the Devil is the father of heresy. Since the Holy Spirit is the divine intermediary through whom the Church received true knowledge, would it not be appropriate for the martyrs (who are His foremost sons) to stamp their blood-wrung authority upon those teachings? Since heresy is the work of the Devil, would it not be appropriate for the martyrs (who are his enemies) to vindicate the Church's teaching?

The martyr dies. The martyr is endowed with the Holy Spirit. The martyr is doctrinally orthodox. Martyrdom is a sign of doctrinal orthodoxy. For Tertullian, these statements were bound together with an inexorable logic. Unfortunately, the impact of the last statement upon his readers was blinded by the fact that he did not explain his epistemological presuppositions in the extracts where he made it.

Moreover, his conclusion depends upon an unspoken premise. That premise is that it is the possession of the Christian Truth alone which can brace a man faced by an agonising

death. Such an assumption takes no account of two factors. Firstly, there is a distinction between actually possessing the truth and being implacably convinced that one possesses it. Secondly, religion is not the only ideal for which men are prepared to die; prominent amongst such other ideals is patriotism.

Tertullian recognised that pagans had performed feats of fortitude in the face of horrendous deaths. Thus, in extracts such as Mart. 4:3, 20-4:8, 17 and Apol. 50:4, 18-50:9, 41, his pastoral and apologetic concerns caused him to set his epistemeology on one side.

Nonetheless, despite this discrepancy, he does seem to have believed that the martyr's death was a token of the verity and sanctity of the beliefs for which he gave up his life. However, can a theory which draws its inspiration less from the spectator's reaction to the events within the amphitheatre than from abstruse retrospective theologising be properly described as a witness-orientated theory?

Although Tertullian failed to employ the language of "confession" and "testimony" in any of those passages where he sought to imprint the martyrs' authority upon the teachings of the Church, the answer must be a cautious affirmative. This despite the fact that stamping authority upon something and teaching somebody are not absolutely congruent concepts.

Martyrdom as the seal upon Church doctrine may indeed have been the artificial construct of a theologian's mind but having laid it before the faithful, Tertullian appears to have genuinely expected it to encourage those who were vacillating on the brink of heresy to become more confident in the Faith. Why else would he have situated such exhortations in works whose purpose was to remove the faithful's perplexities regarding the blandishments of the heretics? Where martyrdom as the seal upon Church doctrine is weakest as a witness-orientated theory is that it does not explicitly allude to the faithful viewing and responding to the martyrs' deaths and it is not explicitly linked with the epistemology upon which it depends - hence my cautious affirmative.

To sum up, important though the idea of evangelising his contemporaries was for Tertullian's understanding of death, his failure to carry the idea consistently through his theology of death suggests that it was not at the forefront of that theology. A prominent example of this was his failure to exploit the potential didactic connotations within the death of the devout ordinary Christian. Another example (albeit less prominent) was his failure to find a place for the reactions of onlookers within martyrdom as a seal upon Church doctrine. Even the Tertullianic version of martyrdom as the act of testifying to the infidel was not always worked through steadfastly and consistently.

Martyrdom may have been ostensibly the enunciation of the Gospel in deeds but sometimes Tertullian depicted the martyr's witness less as a means of converting man, than as a gift offered to the Almighty or a weapon wielded against Satan. Although he recognised that the martyr is the heir to the prophets, he was restrained in his use of this motif. As for the potential analogy between the witness offered to humanity by God and that offered by men, he ignored it completely.

These are admittedly questions of detail and nuance. Nonetheless, by illustrating that Tertullian's attitude to death as a teaching medium was ambivalent, they indicate that that theme was not in the vanguard of his theology of martyrdom.

"Mais tous ont à son égard une attitude commune, à la fois théologique et mystique: l'attitude du témoin. Cette attitude est caractérisée essentiellement par une étroite liaison de la connaissance et de l'adoration. L'esprit de témoignage est l'esprit de celui qui reconnaît, au double sens de ce mot qui implique à la fois la certitude et l'humiliation."<sup>149</sup>

Employed by Brunier of the New Testament "witness", these words would apply equally well to the Tertullianic martyr. As it is found in Tertullian's thought, martyrdom as a teaching medium is marked by intense faith in God and absolute confidence in His promises. There is indeed an abundance of love but that love is directed towards the Christian's God - rather than towards his fellow men. Although he highlighted the misery endured by the Gentiles, enslaved to idolatry, when describing Christ's mission,<sup>150</sup>

he did not highlight the misery endured by pagans in his generation when exhorting the faithful to testify to Christ - an accent which would have imbued his theology of witness with love. Within Tertullian's theology of witness, there was indeed "faith", "hope" and "love" but the greatest of these was faith.

### References : Chapter 3

1. Mt. 28:19 and Mk. 16:15.
2. Mt. 10:18, Mt. 10:32-33, Mt. 10:39 and Lk. 21:12-13.
3. The Sanscrit root "smar"/"smarami" focuses upon the act of "remembering". Therefore, originally the words "μάρτυς" / "μάρτυρία" were concerned with the "remembrance", "recollection" and "testimony" which the individual could offer rather than with death itself. See J W Malcolm "Marturia and Authority in the New Testament", Ph.D. Thesis, Edinburgh, 1963, p.1.
4. "Es wird tatsächlich nur für die Zeugen gebraucht, die für ihr Zeugnis auch gestorben sind, also die Blutzeugen, die Märtyrer. In diesem Sinne wird Antipas von Pergamon, der erschlagen wurde, 'wo der Satan haust', weil er den Glauben seiner Gemeinde nicht preisgab, als ein 'treuer Zeuge' Jesu bezeichnet. Als Zeugen gelten ferner die beiden geheimnisvollen 'Propheten', die den Menschen tausendzweihundertundsechzig Tage lang weissagten und sie mit ihrem Zeugnis 'qualten', bis dass sie endlich erschlagen wurden, und auch das Blut der Heiligen, das die grosse Babylon auf dem scharlachroten Tiere trinkt, ist Blut der Zeugen Jesu". (Hans von Campenhausen, Die Idee des Martyriums in der alten Kirche, Gottingen, 1936, p.44).  
 "Le martyr est un témoin devant le monde païen; son témoignage a un but apologétique ou missionnaire. Le fidèle, témoignant devant les hommes par ses paroles, complète son message par ses actes; le martyr ne s'exprime pas seulement de bouche, mais par un engagement de toute sa vie jusqu'à la mort inclusivement; le martyre est une prédication particulièrement glorieuse et efficace, un signe donné au monde de la vérité de l'évangile". (Marc Lods, Confesseurs et Martyrs: Successeurs des Prophetes dans l'Eglise des Trois Premiers Siecles, Neuchatel, 1958, p.36).
5. H. Delehaye, Sanctus: Essai sur le Culte des Saintes dans l'Antiquité, Brussels, 1927, p.95.
6. Cult. II. 13:1, 8-10.
7. B.S. Olsen-Dopffel, "Pastoral Care of the Sick, the Dying and the Bereaved in Early Swiss and South German Protestantism", Ph.D. Thesis, Edinburgh, 1979.
8. Biblia Patristica, p.234.
9. Resurr. 8:5, 24-8:6, 30, Fug. 9:4, 39-41 and Anim. 55:5, 36-40.
10. Pat. 9:4, 14-17.
11. Marc. IV. 34:13, 10-12, Apol. 49:2, 5-8 and Uxor. II. 6:2, 11-16.
12. Anim. 53:2, 11-53:3, 28.
13. "Proponit igitur tibi corpus amica ui soporis elisum, blanda quietis necessitate prostratum, immobile situ, quale ante uitam iacuit et quale post uitam iacebit, ut testationem plasticæ et sepulturae, expectans animam quasi nondum conlatam et quasi iam ereptam." (Anim. 43:11, 71-75).



14. Seneca, Ad. Marc. Consol. 3:1-4, Seneca, Ad. Poly. Consol. 14:4-5, 15:3, 15:5 and 16:3 and Cicero, Tusc. Disp. II.15:35 and II. 22:53.
15. Pétré, L'Exemplum chez Tertullien, p.16.
16. Seneca's argument that the fickleness of Fortune should cause a man to welcome death in Ep. 4:7 bears a marked similarity to his remarks about Fortune in Ad. Marc. Consol. 22:1. "Neminem eo fortuna prouexit, ut non tantum illi minaretur, quantum permiserat. Noli huic tranquillitati confidere; momento mare euertitur." (Ep. 4:7).  
Seneca's claim that birth is the first step to the grave in Ep. 24:20 is in line with his remarks in Ad. Marc. Consol. 21:6 "Cotidie enim demitur aliqua pars uitae, et tunc quoque, cum crescimus, uita decrescit. Infantiam amisimus, deinde pueritiam, deinde adulescentiam. Usque ad hesternum, quicquid transit temporis, perit; hunc ipsum, quem agimus, diem cum morte diuidimus". (Ep. 24:20).
17. Anim. 52:2, 10-15, Marc. II. 4:6, 27-4:6, 6, Resurr. 18:6, 25-26, 52:11, 66-68 and Pat. 5:15, 51-52.
18. Anim. 43:11, 71-75 and 43:12, 85-89.
19. "Inde deducimur etiam imaginem mortis iam tunc eum recensere." (Anim. 43:10, 61-62.)  
"Etiam per imaginem mortis fidem initiaris, spem meditaris, discis mori et uiuere, discis uigilare, dum dormis." (Anim. 43:12, 87-89).
20. Spect. 30:1, 1-30:7, 36, Fug. 7:2, 32-34, Apol. 47:12, 52-56 and Paen. 12:2, 4-12:5, 17.
21. Resurr. 34:1, 1-34:3, 13, 54:6, 24-45:14, 44, Test. 3:2, 7-13 and Spect. 2:12, 59-69 and Resurr. 6:3, 9-12, Prax. 26:6, 29-37 and Anim. 20:5, 33-38, respectively.
22. Mart. 2:6, 20-2:7, 31, Paen. 7:9, 29-34, Apol. 35:2, 5-35:5, 25, Spect. 25:1, 1-15:5, 20, 27:4, 14-27:5, 21 and Idol. 15:1, 1-15:11, 16.
23. Pat. 9:4, 14-9:5, 19.
24. Cicero, Tusc. Disp. I.49:118.
25. Seneca, Ad. Marc. Consol. 24:5.
26. Seneca, Ad. Poly. Consol. 9:12, Ad. Marc. Consol. 19:4-6, and Ep. 24:18.
27. Fredouille, Tertullien, pp.373-374.
28. M.L. Colish, The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages, Leiden, 1985, Vol. 2, pp.9-29.
29. Plato, Phaid. 64B-68B.
30. "Vaste et diverse, la culture de Tertullien repose en bien des cas sur une connaissance réfléchie, méditée, des grands textes classiques, et avant tout, des oeuvres de Cicéron et de Sénèque." (Fredouille, Tertullien, pp.411-412).
31. Barnes, Tertullian, p.196.
32. "Tertullian's use of Stoic epistemology and ethics is much more limited. He does not seem to have grasped the inner logic of these branches of the Stoic system and he is quite likely to report the ideas in question inaccurately or to alter them significantly ... The particular uses to which Tertullian puts his Stoicism are dictated by the exigencies of the contexts in which they occur. Since he is not interested in developing a systematic theology or a systematic position on Stoicism, he should not be read as if he were working



- toward either of these goals." (Colish, The Stoic Tradition, Vol. 2, p.29).
33. "Mors nos aut consumit aut exuit. Emissis meliora restant onere detracto, consumptis nihil restat, bona pariter malaque submota sunt." (Seneca, Ep. 24:18). See Waszink, Anim. p.460.
  34. "Multo coactius Seneca post mortem, ait, omnia finiuntur, etiam ipsa. Hoc si ita est, iam et mors ad semetipsam pertinebit, si et ipsa finitur; eo magis ad hominem, in quo inter omnia finiendo et ipsa finitur." (Anim. 42:2, 9-13).
  35. Fug. 9:4, 39-41, 10:1, 1-10: 2,18, 12:10, 103-110, Anim. 55:5, 36-40 and Scorp. 6:11, 19-23.
  36. Fug. 9:4, 39-41  
See C.M. Robeck, The Role and Function of Prophetic Gifts for the Church at Carthage, A.D. 202-258, Michigan, 1987, pp.229-232 and Aune, Prophecy in Early Christianity, pp.313-316.
  37. P.de Labriolle, La Crise Montaniste, Paris, 1913, p.53.
  38. Marc. II, 4:5, 20-4:6, 6, Scorp. 5:10, 14-5:13, 29 and Cult. I. 1:2, 16-21.
  39. Anim. 27:7, 40-27:9, 57 and 27:1, 1-27:6, 40.  
See Waszink, Anim. pp.342-348 and 352-353.
  40. Apol. 2:1, 1-2:20, 111, Nat. I. 2:1, 8-2:10, 12, Ieiun. 12:3, 27-12:4, 12 and Scorp. 10:8, 24-10:17, 4.
  41. N.P. Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin, London, 1927, p.242.
  42. Williams, The Fall, p.240.
  43. Rom.7:23.
  44. Fug. 14:3, 20-24 and Prax. 29:7, 45-48.
  45. Williams, The Fall, pp.238-245.  
"If infants are born subject to 'God's wrath and damnation', and if baptism releases from this, it is clearly inhuman to delay the administration of the sacrament to them for a second longer than is necessary. Tertullian, however, knows nothing of this line of reasoning, and thinks rather of the terrible danger of post-baptismal actual sin which haunts those who receive the rite without long and searching preparation." (p. 241).  
"Moreover, free-will remains even in fallen man, so that real repentance and real change of life are possible under the impulsion of divine grace." (p.243).
  46. A taste of the character of the crowds which usually populated the amphitheatre can be obtained from Spect. 27:1, 1-27:4, 13, 25:1, 1-25:4, 15 and 15:3, 9-15:6, 22.
  47. That these were indeed the common modes of execution inflicted upon the martyrs can be confirmed by Apol. 12:3, 12-12:5, 20, Scorp. 1:11, 11-12, Pat. 13:8, 30-35 and Mart. 4:2, 17-20.
  48. "Dehinc acu requisita et dispersos capillos infibulavit; non enim decebat martyram sparsis capillis pati, ne in sua gloria plangere uideretur."
  49. Examples include "confessio" - Apol. 2:10, 50, 2:15, 78, Fug. 9:1, 6, Marc. IV. 39: 7,8, Scorp. 9:11, 10 and Uxor. I. 3:4, 22; "confessor" - Cor. 11:5, 39, Marc. IV. 28:5, 17, Prax. 26:9, 28 and Scorp. 11:3, 21; and "confiteri" - Apol. 2:13, 66, 2:17, 90, Fug. 5:12, 8, Ieiun. 12:3, 7, Nat. I. 3:2, 24 and Scorp. 9:9, 25, respectively.

50. Examples include "testimonium" - Anim. 19:9, 59, Fug. 2:1, 13, Resurr. 9:2, 10, Scorp. 8:1, 19 and Uxor. I. 3:4, 23; and "testari" - Scorp. 9:9, 19, respectively.
51. The closest which Mohrmann came to such a discussion is in Les Latin des Chrétiens, Vol. 1, pp.30-32, and Vol. 2, pp.1-6 and 122. However, there she was concerned merely with the specifically Christian usage rather than with the wider connotations of the words. For example, in Vol. 1, p.31, Mohrmann states:  
 "Dans la période préconstantinienne 'confiteri' et 'confessio' sont étroitement liés à l'idée de 'souffrance et mort pour l'amour de la foi, quoiqu'on ne pût pas dire qu'un sens secondaire se soit développé ... même après la paix constantinienne cette liaison d'idées se fait parfois jour, comp. p. ex. saint Augustin, Serm. 199, 2, 3, qui dit à propos du massacre des innocents: 'illi pro Christo potuerunt pati quem nondum potuerunt confiteri'."
52. "Uociferatur homo: 'Christianus sum'. Quod est, dicit; tu uis audire quod non est. Ueritatis extorquendae praesides de nobis solis mendacium audire laboratis! 'Hoc sum', inquit, 'quod quaeris an sim. Quid me torques in peruersum! Confiteor, et torques: quid faceres, si negarem?' Plane aliis negantibus non facile fidem accommodatis: nobis si negauerimus, statim creditis." (Apol. 2:13, 62-69)  
 See also Apol. 2:10, 45-49, Nat. I. 2:1, 8-2:8, 1 and Ieiun. 12:3, 4-9.
53. A.N. Sherwin-White, "Early Persecutions and Roman Law Again", J.T.S., N.S. III, 1952, pp.199-213 and Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution, pp.166-167.
54. Examples include Apol. 1:12, 66, 39:6, 30, Uxor. I. 3:4, 23, Marc. I. 24:4, 28, IV. 28:5, 18 and Ual. 30:2, 7.
55. Examples include Scorp. 9:9, 26, 11:2, 13, Fug. 7:1, 10, 7:1, 13, Cor. 2:1, 3, Prax. 29:7, 47 and Ieiun. 12:3, 7.
56. Examples include Scorp. 9:4, 7, 9:9, 18, Resurr. 9:2, 10 and Anim. 19:9, 39.
57. Examples include Uxor. I. 3:4, 23 and Ual. 2.2, 28.
58. See Chapter 2, note 61.
59. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp.387, 393, 393, 393, 397 and 400, respectively.
60. Praes. 8:4, 9-11, Marc. III. 2:1, 5-9 and III. 2:3, 17-20; and Prax. 22:3, 12-22:4, 21, 22:9, 53-22:11, 74 and 21:8, 42-21:18, 91, respectively.
61. Biblia Patristica, Vol 1, pp. 251, 311 and 370, respectively.
62. Carn. 5:3, 23, Cor. 11:5, 39, Fug. 1:3, 26, 5:2, 13, 7:11, 9 and 11, 9:4, 32, 12:5, 52, Idol. 13:6, 8, Marc. IV. 28:4, 9, IV. 28:4, 15, Prax. 26:9, 48, Scorp. 9:8, 11, 9:9, 25, 9:11, 14, 9:13, 24, 10:4, 27, 10:15, 12, 10:17, 3 and 15:6, 30.
63. Only three of the references in the preceding note can be definitely ascribed to Lk. 12:8-9 alone (Marc. IV. 28:4, 9, IV. 28:4, 15 and Prax. 26:9, 48). By contrast, eight of them are recognisably allusions to Mt. 10:32-33 alone (Carn. 5:3, 23, Fug. 9:4, 32, Idol. 13:6, 8, Scorp. 9:8, 11, 9:9, 25, 9:11, 14, 9:13, 24 and 10:4, 27).

64. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp.253 and 354, respectively.
65. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, p.253.
66. Marc. IV. 28:4, 8-28:5, 26, Scorp. 9:8, 11-17, 10:4, 23-10:4, 4 and Fug. 7:1, 7-15.
67. Scorp. 9:4, 2-11, 10:4, 20-10:4, 4 and Anim. 19:9, 57-60.
68. Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution, p.87 and Malcolm, "Marturia and Authority", pp. 14-76.
69. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp. 85, 85, 120, 122 and 142, respectively.
70. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp.158 and 164, respectively.
71. ibid., Vol. 1, pp.148 and 161, respectively.
72. ibid., Vol. 1, pp.251, 251, 253, 280, 311, 354, 370, 416, 436, 514, 515, 530, 534, 538, 540 and 543, respectively.
73. "Sed et interim sub altari martyrum animae placidum quiescunt et fiducia ultionis patientiam pascunt et indutae stolis candidam claritatis usurpant, donec et alii consortium illorum gloriae impleant." (Scorp. 12:9, 25-12:9, 1).
74. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp.252, 253, 254, 280, 311, 370, 371, 371, 514, 534, 538, 540, 543, 543 and 543, respectively.
75. Scorp. 10:10, 12-10:11, 19, Apol. 50:2, 7-11 and Fug. 6:2, 16-19, and Ieiun. 17:8, 20-25, Scorp. 6:1-3 and Apol. 23:17, 86-23:19, 97, respectively.
76. Scap. 5:4, 23.
77. Marc. V. 10:5, 19-22.
78. J.P. Waltzing, Tertullien Apologétique: Commentaire Analytique, Grammatical et Historique, Paris, 1914-1919, p.208.
79. Scorp. 8:2, 25-8:3, 27.
80. Examples of such a use of "sanguis" include Anim. 25:4, 36, Apol. 9:8, 32, 9:13, 60, Carn. 19:3, 22, Ieiun. 4:3, 24 and Marc. II. 25:3, 18.
81. Examples of such a use of "sanguis" include Anim. 55:5, 40, Apol. 21:25, 131, Fug. 12:9, 96, Ieiun. 12:2, 25, Marc. IV. 39:4, 13 and Scorp. 6:9, 10.
82. Young, The Use of Sacrificial Ideas., pp. 55-56.
83. "A primordio enim iustitia uim patitur. Statim ut coli deus coepit, inuidiam religio sortita est. Qui deo placuerat, occiditur, et quidem a fratre. Quo procliuius impietas alienum sanguinem insectaretur, a suo auspiciata insectata est denique non modo iustorum, uerum etiam et prophetarum."
84. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, p.524.
85. "Plane religiosiores estis in cauea, ubi super sanguinem humanum, super inquinamenta poenarum proinde saltant dei uestri, argumenta et historias noxiis ministrantes, nisi quod et ipsos deos uestros saepe noxii induunt. Uidimus aliquando castratum Attin, illum deum uestrum ex Pessinunte, et qui uiuus ardebat, Herculem induerat. Risimus et inter ludicras meridianorum crudelitates Mercurium mortuos cauterio examinantem; uidimus et Iouis fratrem gladiatorum cadauera cum malleo deducentem." (Apol. 15:4, 17-15:5, 25).  
See also Spect. 25:4, 12-14 and Apol. 9:2, 4-9:8, 36.
86. Scap. 5:4, 23-26.

87. Apol. 50:15, 66.
88. Apol. 50:15, 66; and Scap. 5:4, 24, respectively.
89. Fredouille, Tertullien, p.414.
90. ibid., Tertullien, p.439.
91. Examples of the rarity with which Tertullian directly cited the text of the Bible in his apologetic works can be found in his account of the life of Christ in Apol. 21:7, 31-21:23, 123, his description of the nature of the Devil in Test. 3:12, 7-13 and his exposition of Christian ethics in Apol. 45:3, 11-16. Despite the fact that these were occasions when Biblical quotations would have been relevant, Tertullian only applied them sparingly.
92. Barnes, Tertullian, pp.43-44.
93. Scorp. 13:12, 5.
94. "Talis igitur excetra delictorum cur non dominum offendat improbatores malorum? An non ipsum quoque Israel per inpatientiam semper in deum deliquisse manifestum est? Exinde cum oblitus brachii caelestis quo Aegyptiis adflictationibus fuerat extractus de Aaron deos sibi duces postulat, cum in idolum auri sui conlationes defundit: tam necessarias enim Moysei cum domino congregantis impatienter exceperat moras! Post mannae escatilem pluuiam, post petrae aquatilem sequellam desperant de domino tridui sitim non sustinendo; nam haec quoque illis impatientia a domino exprobratur."
95. Fug. 12:3, 28-31.
96. Scorp. 13:12, 1 and 13:12, 3, respectively.
97. Scorp. 13:12, 1-2.
98. Scorp. 13:12, 2-3.
99. F.A. Fishel "Prophet and Martyr", J.Q.R., 37, 1946-1947, p.270.
100. Fishel, "Prophet and Martyr", p.270.
101. ibid., p.279.
102. ibid., p.363.
103. ibid., p.364.
104. ibid., p.279.
105. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp.234, 275, 279, 358, 420 and 507, respectively.
106. Marc. III. 7:6, 18-20, and Iud. 14:7, 40-42, and Prax. 4:2, 9-17 and 17:1, 1-17:4, 26, respectively.
107. Marc. III. 17:3, 22-17:4, 29, IV 18:4, 13-18, and V. 8:4, 25-8:4, 15.
108. "The authority of the Prophet or Witness is that of God who sends him and testifies through him for Micaiah says: 'As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.' The authority of the prophetic witness is that of a teacher inspired by the Spirit of God." (Malcolm, "Marturia and Authority", p. 39).
109. Scorp. 9:8, 11-9:10, 6.
110. Scorp. 8:2, 25.
111. Scorp. 8:3, 1.
112. Pétré L'Exemplum chez Tertullien, pp.95-98.
113. "Quae tamen passos apostolos scimus, manifesta doctrina est. Hanc intellego solam Acta decurrens, nihil quaero. Carceres illic et uincula et flagella et saxa et gladii et impetus Iudaeorum et coetus nationum et tribunorum elogia et regum auditoria et proconsulum tribunalia et Caesaris nomen interpretem non habent. Quod Petrus caeditur, quod Stephanus opprimitur, quod



- Iacobus immolatur, quod Paulus distrahitur, ipsorum sanguine scripta sunt. Et si fidem commentarii uoluerit haereticus, instrumenta imperii loquentur, ut lapides Hierusalem. Uitas Caesarum legimus: orientem fidem Romae primus Nero cruentauit. Tunc Petrus ab altero cingitur, cum cruci adstringitur. Tunc Paulus ciuitatis Romanae consequitur natiuitatem, cum illic martyrii renascitur generositate. Haec ubicumque iam legero, pati disco."
114. Cast. 4:4, 25-4:5, 39 and Monog. 3:6, 45-51; and Apol. 21:25, 128-131 and Scorp. 15:1, 2-15:4, 15, respectively.
  115. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp.263 and 392.
  116. Fug. 14:3, 20-24, Scorp. 11:3, 17-19 and Prax. 29:7, 45-48.
  117. Anim. 55:4, 29-35.  
See Saxer, Morts, Martyrs, Reliques, pp.76-80, Robeck, Prophetic Gifts, pp.218-223 and W.C. Weinrich, Spirit and Martyrdom, Washington, 1981, pp.223-225.
  118. "Quid nunc et ad ecclesiam et quidem tuam, psychice? Secundum enim Petri personam spiritalibus potestas ista conueniet, aut apostolo aut prophetae. Nam et ipsa ecclesia proprie et principaliter ipse est spiritus, in quo est trinitas unius diuinitatis, pater et filius et spiritus sanctus. Illam ecclesiam congregat quam dominus in tribus posuit. Atque ita exinde etiam numerus omnis qui in hanc fidem conspirauerint ecclesia ab auctore et consecratore censetur. Et ideo ecclesia quidem delicta donabit, sed ecclesia spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non ecclesia numerus episcoporum." (Pud. 21:16, 69-21:17, 78).  
See also Ieiun. 1:2, 10-16 and Monog. 1:3, 17-24.
  119. Lods, Martyrs and Confesseurs, p. 11.
  120. See note 4.
  121. Examples include "testis" - Anim. 9:4, 39 and Bapt. 12:2, 11; "testimonium" - Marc. III. 2:1, 6 and Prax. 22:3, 15; "testari" - Marc. IV. 25:10, 7 and Prax. 7:1, 10; and "testificari" - Anim. 17:13, 90 respectively.
  122. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp.141, 147-148, 254, 339, 340, 382, 384, 397, 405, 514 and 539.
  123. Examples include "confessio" - Praes. 25:4, 121; "testimonium" - Marc. III. 20:5, 2 and IV. 9:14, 3; and "testari" - Marc. II. 10:3, 13 and Prax. 26:8, 41, respectively.
  124. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, p.411.
  125. "Laudicenos diuitiis fidentes obiurgat: et tamen omnes ad paenitentiam commonet".
  126. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 2, p.429, Vol. 3, p.445 and Vol. 1, p.514.
  127. Prax. 29:7, 46.
  128. Fug. 14:3, 21-22.
  129. Prax. 29:7, 47.
  130. Fug. 14:3, 34.
  131. Mt. 10:32-33 and 10:19-20, respectively.
  132. "That the Spirit is the author of Scripture is strongly expressed by Tertullian (de patient. 7.5: adu Marc. 5.7.2; de resurr. 13.3, etc.). The Scripture is therefore one; Peter and Paul must agree (de orat. 20.2); John cannot be thought to have conceded what Paul denied (de pudic. 19.3). Only late in his

- Montanist period does Tertullian insist on the action of the Spirit in understanding the Scriptures. The authority of the Scriptures is more assumed than proven by Tertullian." (T. P. O'Malley Tertullian and the Bible: Language, Imagery, Exegesis, Nijmegen, 1967, p.123).
133. Anim. 45:3, 12-13.
  134. Robeck, Prophetic Gifts, p.204.
  135. Marc. IV. 22:5, 1-8 and Anim. 11:4, 33-41.
  136. "Et quomodo, inquis, memor est somniorum anima, scilicet quam compotem esse non licet? Hoc erit proprietas amentiae huius, quia non fit ex corruptela bonae uoletudinis, sed ex ratione naturae; nec enim exterminat, sed auocat mentem."
  137. Robeck, Prophetic Gifts, p.205.
  138. "Aliud est concutere, aliud mouere, aliud euertere, aliud agitare." (Anim. 45:5, 27-28).
  139. Apol. 18:1, 1-7, Pat. 7:5, 14-15 and Marc. V. 7:1, 15-7:2, 25, and Cast. 3:6, 35-45 and Monoq. 3:4, 35-3:6, 51.  
See A. D'Alés La Theologie de Tertullian, Paris, 1905, pp.221-222.
  140. Scorp. 6:11, 14-18 and Pat. 16:5, 15-18.
  141. Fug. 3:2, 23-24, Scorp. 9:7, 5-6 and Resurr. 35:9, 36-38.
  142. Mart. 3:3, 23-26, 4:9, 17-24, Scorp. 6:11, 14-18, 12:8, 15-21:10, 7, 13:4, 1-5 and 13:12, 18-22.
  143. Scorp. 6:9, 9-6:11, 18 and Bapt. 16:1, 1-16:2, 10.
  144. Pud. 3:3, 12-3:4, 17 and 21:3, 5-9.
  145. Young, The Use of Sacrificial Ideas., p.164.
  146. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp.343 and 347.
  147. ibid., Vol. 1, pp. 406, 407, 408 and 408-409, respectively.
  148. ibid., Vol. 1, pp.261, 533, 534, 541 and 543, respectively.
  149. E. Burnier, La Notion de Témoignage, Lausanne, 1939, pp.68-69.
  150. Marc. II. 20:4, 22-27.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DEATH : THE CULMINATION OF MAN'S CONFLICT** **WITH THE POWERS OF EVIL**



#### 4. DEATH : THE CULMINATION OF MAN'S CONFLICT WITH THE POWERS OF EVIL

If the presupposition that evil is a concrete ever-present reality is accepted, (the presupposition upon which Paen. 7:9, 29-34 depends) it follows that death must derive part of its meaning from man's interaction with that reality. If God is the antithesis of evil (the antithesis assumed by Spect. 2:4, 19-2:5, 27) His servants must logically stand in a state of unrelenting hostility towards the forces of evil. That hostility cannot exclude their final moments.

In this chapter, I shall seek to demonstrate that conflict with and defeat of the forces of evil lay at the heart of Tertullian's martyr theology. (Indeed, such was the hold of demonology over the mind of Tertullian, it may even have left its mark on his understanding of ordinary death). I shall also seek to demonstrate that it is only by recognising the differing nuances within martyrdom as conflict that his theology of death can be properly understood.

##### 4.1 Martyrdom as triumph over the powers of evil.

##### 4.1.1 The martyr as the soldier of Christ.

"Le moraliste aurait-il durci son attitude face à l'accroissement des dangers, à la façon d'un général qui exige une discipline plus rigoureuse à l'approche de l'ennemi? Aurait-il repris à son compte la vieille tradition militaire romaine, qui

assimilait tout fuyard à un déserteur et refusait de racheter les prisonniers? On le croirait d'autant plus volontiers qu'il assimile souvent le chrétien à un soldat de Dieu, et la persécution à une bataille où Dieu envoie ses troupes combattre contre Satan. A l'objection 'qui fuyait combattrait de nouveau', il répond, précisément dans le De Fuga: 'Il fournit un bon soldat au Christ son général en chef, celui qui, si complètement armé par l'Apôtre, déserte le jour de la persécution dès qu'il a entendu la trompette de la persécution ... Mais aucun de ses arguments n'est probant et ne justifie la substitution d'un principe militaire à un autre, du 'tenir coûte que coûte' au 'repli stratégique', d'une tradition humaine à un ordre divin. Il est donc peu probable qu'ils suffisent à expliquer sa position; il est même très vraisemblable qu'il n'a eu recours à eux que comme justification à posteriori d'une conviction dont les vrais fondements étaient ailleurs."<sup>1</sup>

Here, C. Rambaux warns against the assumption that Roman military discipline was the inspiration for the Tertullianic "miles Christi" motif. Nonetheless, though Roman military discipline did not inspire it, it certainly coloured it; the parallels between the Tertullianic "miles Christi" and his secular counterpart are notable.<sup>2</sup>

The secular soldier took an oath of allegiance to the Emperor ("sacramentum"); the soldier of Christ took an oath of allegiance - the oath by which he had renounced (in the waters of baptism) the Devil, his pomp and his angels.<sup>3</sup> The secular soldier was pledged to fight beneath his legion's standard ("signum", "uexillum"); the soldier of Christ was pledged to fight beneath the banner of his "Emperor"<sup>4</sup> - Christ.

Furthermore, they both had a "seal" conferred upon them ("signaculum"/"signum") - the soldier of Caesar wore a leaden seal with the Emperor's bust imprinted upon it,

around his neck, the soldier of Christ had had the sign of the cross marked upon his forehead.<sup>5</sup>

Mohrmann may be correct in her assumption that, in the early Church, the analogy between the Christian's baptismal vow and the soldier's oath of allegiance was primarily a literary device -

"le rapprochement de 'sacramentum' chrétien et de 'serment militaire', là où il s'agit de la formule baptismale, est un artifice littéraire, destiné à impressionner des gens qui ne s'étaient pas encore détachés des traditions romaines".<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, it was a literary device which Tertullian took seriously and which he evidently expected his readers to take seriously too.

Indeed, such military symbolism had a profound impact upon his theology of martyrdom. Since each baptised Christian has taken an oath renouncing the service of the Devil and has been sealed with the sign of the cross, each Christian is a member of the divine army. To quote Mart. 3:1, 12-13 - "uocati sumus ad militiam dei uiui iam tunc, cum in sacramenti uerba respondimus". Cor. 11:5, 42-43 made the point even more bluntly - "apud hunc tam miles est paganus fidelis, quam paganus est miles fidelis". If the faithful soldier is obliged to be a mere civilian, the faithful civilian is obliged to be a soldier - a soldier engaged in spiritual warfare.

The result is that no Christian can evade martyrdom on the grounds that martyrs are an elite who have been given a

special calling. Because every Christian is a "miles Christi", every Christian has been called to martyrdom.

Thus, the military metaphor enabled Tertullian to denounce the Christian who apostalised in the most scathing terms. Apostatisation was nothing less than desertion from God's army.<sup>7</sup> Fug. 10:1, 4-8 exploited this analogy to the full, depicting those nominal Christians who flee during persecution as deserters from God's army to the camp of the Devil; when the war against the Devil reaches their front and the trumpet sounds the call to stand fast, they desert ("deserere") their posts:

"Bonum militem Christo imperatori suo praestat qui tam plene ab apostolo armatus tuba persecutionis audita diem deserit persecutionis! Respondebo et ego de saeculo aliquid: 'usque adeone mori miserum est?'"

"Sacramentum" - it is significant that Tertullian chose to both open and close Scorp. 4:5, 14-18 (an extract where he described martyrdom as fierce hand-to-hand combat) with this word.<sup>8</sup> By so doing, he adroitly associated the martyr's struggle with his baptism and therefore with his oath of allegiance. That oath was made not to a human authority but to a divine Lord;<sup>9</sup> it was binding not for a limited period but for life.

In the Roman army, desertion was a capital crime. Speaking of the soldier's military oath. J. Helgeland observes:

"The 'sacramentum' was the military oath recited upon enlistment and twice a year thereafter for the remainder of a soldier's time of service. In republican times 'sacramentum' meant an oath or a

bonded agreement between two parties. The agreement eventually came to be considered sacred ... In the army one who broke the oath was regarded as 'nefas', liable to punishment from men and the gods; such a person was beyond the protection of the law and legally a fair target for anyone who wished practice."<sup>10</sup>

That oath demanded "unquestioned obedience to the emperor as the highest authority."<sup>11</sup>

In the army of God, desertion was capital crime too - a crime which (unless it was later paid for with the martyr's own blood) earned the former Christian eternal death.<sup>12</sup> By underlining the heinous nature of apostatisation, the metaphor of the divine soldier reminded the faithful that martyrdom is an obligation - not an option.

The heinousness of apostatisation was not, however, the only consequence of Tertullian's appropriation of the military metaphor. As both Cicero and Seneca confirm, Roman soldiers had the reputation for being extremely hardy and were renowned for performing deeds of fortitude and endurance.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, as Mart. 3:1, 13-3:2, 18 confirms, Tertullian was aware of this reputation:

"Nemo miles ad bellum cum deliciis uenit, nec de cubiculo ad aciem procedit, sed de papilionibus expeditis et substrictis, ubi omnis duritia et inbonitas et insauitas constitit. Etiam in pace labore et incommodis bellum pati iam ediscunt, in armis deambulando, campum decurrendo, fossam moliendo, testudinem densando".

The title "soldier of Christ" was, therefore, an excellent device for understanding and even for justifying the hardships endured by the prospective martyrs, whilst they are in prison, awaiting the commencement of the final battle.

If the "soldiers of Christ" are to hold their own in that battle, they (like their secular counterparts) must have their bodies hardened and their minds strengthened. In the words of Mart. 3:2, 18-3:3, 23:

"Sudore omnia constant, ne corpora atque animi expauescant de umbra ad solem et sole ad gelum, de tunica ad lorica, de silentio ad clamorem, de quiete ad tumultum. Proinde uos, benedicti, quodcumque hoc durum est, ad exercitationem uirtutum animi et corporis deputate."

The key word here is "exercitatio". Prison provides the martyrs with the practice they require if they are to be sufficiently inured to hardship to deal with the pain of martyrdom.

Then there is the fact that on three separate occasions,<sup>14</sup> Tertullian chose the example of a Roman General, M. Atilius Regulus, when seeking to encourage the faithful to face death with fortitude. Part of the attraction of Regulus' example was, of course, the manner of his death; because Regulus died by being impaled<sup>15</sup>, the analogy can be drawn with the martyr who is nailed to a cross.<sup>16</sup> In Mart. 4:6, 36-4:6, 3, however, Tertullian was at pains to point out that Regulus was a military leader ("dux"):

"Regulus, dux Romanorum, captus a Carthaginensibus, cum se unum pro multis captiuis Carthaginensibus compensari nolisset, maluit hostibus reddi et in arcae genus stipatus undique extrinsecus clauis transfixus, tot cruces sensit."

By his courage and fortitude in the face of an agonising death, Regulus exemplified the behaviour which was the appropriate response of all honourable soldiers and,



therefore, the appropriate response of all honourable Christians.

Applied to Tertullian's theology of death, the implications of the dimension of hardship and endurance within the military metaphor were twofold. They taught the faithful that the martyr's death is something which has to be prepared for during life (that is, prepared for by eschewing self-indulgence) and that a life of hardship and suffering is the means to an honourable death.

If the "miles Christi" metaphor makes martyrdom the duty of all Christians and proves that God employs the harsh prison conditions imposed by the pagan authorities for His own ends, it is also an excellent vehicle for expressing the intense hostility which prevails between the martyr and the forces of evil.

Redolant as it is of the heat of battle and the passions thereof, Scorp, 4:5, 14-18 radiates such a spirit of antipathy and enmity. Challenged by the enemy, Christ's soldier stands in the front-line ("acies"). he fights eagerly, even furiously ("depugnare") and having been cut into pieces by the enemy ("concidere"), he expires on the battlefield of the arena. Scorp. 4:5, 14-18 provides its readers with a cameo; it is the spectacle of a bout of hand-to-hand combat from within the wider battle. By so doing, Tertullian rendered the martyr's enemies more immediate and underlined the fact that the struggle in which he is engaged is extremely emotionally charged.



Thus, in contrast to the metaphor of the athletic contest (where rivalry is simply the means whereby the competitor is encouraged to strive for ever-greater personal excellence)<sup>17</sup> the metaphor of the battle elevates the martyrs' animosity towards their spiritual enemies to a virtue in its own right<sup>18</sup> - not simply a tool by which they might be spurred on to more heroic deeds. This is not to deny that passages such as Scorp. 6:1, 3-9 and Ieiun. 17:8, 20-25 imbue the divine athletic contest with a profound spirit of rivalry<sup>19</sup> - the rivalry between the human martyrs and their demoniac challengers - or that the athletes of God had a vivid image of their demoniac opponents even before their eyes.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, since secular battles have their origin in the enmity of the protagonists, the metaphor of the battle is particularly well-suited to the expression of the hostility which prevails between the martyrs and the forces of evil.

The battle as a vehicle for expressing the hostility which prevails between the martyr and his enemies is, however, not without its ambiguities. Scorp. 4:5, 14-18 ostensibly depicts those enemies as human enemies, either the pagans, who persecute the faithful (Scorp. 4:3, 3-4:4, 14) or the heretics who encourage them to apostatise (Scorp. 4:2, 22-27). Scorp. 4:5, 14-18 displays hostility towards those enemies (the pronoun used in Scorp. 4:5, 15 is the plural "illis") yet as Tertullian was aware the Christian is duty bound to love his enemies.<sup>21</sup>

The explanation probably lies outwith Scorp., in such excerpts as Apol. 2:18, 94-2:19, 105 and 27:4, 13-18. There, he taught that when the pagans persecute the Faith, they are acting under the impulse of the powers of evil; they are nothing more than the pawns of their demoniac masters. To quote Apol. 27:4, 13:18:

"Ille scilicet spiritus daemonicae et angelicae paraturae, qui, noster ob diuortium aemulus et ob dei gratiam inuidus, de mentibus uestris aduersus nos proeliatur occulta inspiratione modulatis et subornatis ad omnem, quam in primordio exorsi sumus, et iudicandi peruersitatem et saeuiendi iniquitatem".

Hence the hostility which pervades Scorp. 4:5, 14-18 was directed not against the pagan persecutors themselves but against the spiritual enemies whom they represented.

Incorporated in Tertullian's martyr theology, the metaphor of the battle served three purposes. It demonstrated that hatred for his spiritual enemies was a proper emotion for the martyr to feel. It underlined the fact that the martyr's death is not a placid death but a death charged with intense passion. It reminded the faithful that the martyr's path is blocked by enemies whose hatred is so profound that they will stop at nothing in a bid to prevent them reaching their goal. Because his spiritual enemies are totally committed, there can be no half-measures in the true Christian's response - only absolute loyalty to his Commander and total commitment to the cause of God. There can be no compromise between the "camp of light" and the "camp of darkness";<sup>22</sup> the enemies of his Commander must be his own enemies.<sup>23</sup>

A vehicle of the hostility which prevails between the martyr and his spiritual foes, the military metaphor is also an excellent vehicle by which to express the brutal character of the martyr's death. Apol. 50:3, 12-13 asserts that if he is to be victorious, the martyr must be "cut down". "Sed occidimur. - Certe, cum obtinuimus. Ergo uincimus, cum occidimur, denique euadimus, cum obducimur." Scorp. 4:5, 14-18 maintains that the martyr must be "cut to pieces" ("concidere") by the enemy and "fall" ("occidere") on the field of battle:

"Huic sacramento militans ab hostibus prouocor. Par sum illis, nisi illis manus dederō. Hoc defendendo depugno in acie, uulneror, concidor, occidō. Quis hunc militi suo exitum uoluit, nisi qui tali sacramento eum consignauit?"

Pud. 22:11, 47-22:12, 57 contrasts the adulterer's gentle, even pleasant lapse into sin with the savage battle ("proelium", "dimicatio") fought and lost by the failed martyr:

"Ingeram usque in finem necesse est: quaecunque auctoritas, quaecunque ratio moeche et fornicatori pacem ecclesiasticam reddit, eadem debet et homicidae et idololatrae paenitentibus subuenire, certe negatori, et utique illi, quem in proelio confessionis tormentis conluctatum saeuitia deiecit. Ceterum indignum deo et illius misericordia, eius qui paenitentiam peccatoris morti praeuertit, ut facilius in ecclesiam redeant, qui subdendo quam qui dimicando ceciderunt. Urget nos dicere indignitas: contaminata potius corpora reuocabis quam cruentata?"

Scorp. 4:5, 16-18 even goes so far as to assert that such a merciless conflict is part of the divine plan.

Whilst Scorp. 6:1, 3-9, with its reference to the martyr being snatched from the Devil's "throat", is a warning against assuming that the metaphor of a battle is the sole means of expressing effectively the blood-wrung, brutal nature of the martyr's death (set as it is amid an athletic metaphor) the military metaphor was peculiarly well suited for that purpose. Martyrdom is, on the surface at least, often a grisly death.

If martyrdom was, however, in the eyes of Tertullian, often a grisly death, it was also a triumphant death. Apol. 50:2, 7-50:3, 17 visualises the martyr garbed in a "tunica palmata" (the tunic worn by military victors) and drawn in a victor's chariot. In case the triumphal message was missed, he repeatedly employed the word "uictoria", in that passage, when describing the martyr's final moments.<sup>24</sup> I quote:

"Proelium est nobis, quod prouocamur ad tribunalia, ut illic sub discrimine capitis pro ueritate certemus. Uictoria est autem, pro quo certaueris, obtinere. Ea uictoria habet et gloriam placendi deo et praedam uiuendi in aeternum. Sed occidimur. - Certe, cum obtinuimus. Ergo uincimus, cum occidimur, denique euadimus, cum obducimur. Licet nunc et 'sarmentarios' et 'semiaxios' appelletis, quia ad stipitem dimidii axis reuincti sarmentorum ambitu exurimur. Hic est habitus uictoriae nostrae, haec palmata uestis, tali curru triumphamus!"

Waltzing recognises the significance of the Roman "victory parade" for a proper understanding of this passage, describing that parade in the following terms:

"Le général victorieux, le triomphateur, revêtu des insignes du triomphe ('tunica palmata', tunique brodée de palmes, ch. 50, 3, 'toga picta', toge de pourpre brodée d'or, et un sceptre surmonté d'un aigle), était debout sur un char

circulaire décoré de sculptures en ivoire ('currus triumphalis') et trainé par quatre chevaux. Il avait le front ceint d'une guirlande de laurier; un esclave public, placé derrière lui, tenait au-dessus de sa tête une couronne d'or massif ornée de pierres précieuses."<sup>25</sup>

Tertullian may have alluded simply to the "tunica palmata" and the "currus triumphalis" but those allusions must have evoked for his original readers the traditional triumphal scene - a scene which transformed a man who had apparently been conquered by death into a man who had conquered death.

Although Cor. 11:1, 3-6 demonstrates that Tertullian recognised that the wearing of the "tunica palmata" was not confined to military figures (clothing with it as he did those men who escort the statues of the gods when they are processed through the streets) the military overtones of Apol. 50:2, 7-50:3, 17 are self-evident. Thus, whilst he was guilty of promoting the martyr from the rank of foot-soldier to the rank of general, Tertullian succeeded in transforming the final defeat into the ultimate victory.

Finally, the metaphor of the divine soldier encouraged a corporate understanding of the martyr's death. Just as the individual secular soldier is merely one component in a wider army, the individual Christian is merely one component in the army of God. This comes across clearly in Eug. 10:1, 4-8, where the faithful await the rallying call of the trumpet of God; such trumpet calls played a vital role in the heat of battle in instructing armies whether to advance or to retreat. They did not instruct individuals. Even Scorp. 4:5, 14-18, where martyrdom is depicted in terms of hand-to-hand combat with the forces of evil, is not really



at variance with the corporate character of the military metaphor, because such combat was an integral part of ancient battles and therefore an integral part of the godly's wider battle against the powers of evil.

The message for Tertullian's martyr theology is clear. The martyr's death is not an isolated event; it is one of many blows struck by a multitudinous host.

Frend is well justified when he observes of Tertullian:

"To him, as to his Montanist co-religionists in Phrygia, the 'milita Christi' was a reality, with its own 'sacramentum' to Christ, its own 'castrum', its 'signa', obeying its own 'disciplina' and grasping at the envied 'corona' - that of the martyr".<sup>26</sup>

However, spiritual welfare, as it is engaged in by the martyr, is not without paradox. Firstly, the Christian is challenged to hand-to-hand combat by the powers of evil,<sup>27</sup> yet in contrast to warfare as it is normally understood, it is by dying himself and not by killing his enemies that the martyr achieves victory. As Apol. 50:3, 14-17 saw clearly, it is in the very moment of his apparent defeat that the martyr attains victory.<sup>28</sup> (For a theologian who believed that the Devil and his minions are immortal spirits,<sup>29</sup> there was no place for the martyrs' opponent being "killed").

I grant that in so far as the martyr evangelises men and thereby weakens the Devil's power base, the paradox is more apparent than real. Nevertheless, taken literally, it

highlights the fact that the battle motif, however powerful, does not absolutely conform to the martyr's experience.

Secondly, although metaphors draw much of their meaning from the reality which they copy, Tertullian sets his predilection for the "miles Christi" motif alongside a vehement rejection of the secular soldier's profession.<sup>30</sup> Secular warfare is a manifestation of the old aeon; spiritual warfare is a manifestation of the new aeon - the aeon ushered in by Christ.<sup>31</sup>

The explanation is simple. Whilst Tertullian abhorred the idolatrous associations of the Emperor's army (associations which he described so vividly in Cor. 11:1, 1-11:3, 24) he was too accomplished a controversialist to pass over the metaphor's potential for the Christian life.

#### 4.1.2 Tertullian's exegesis of Ephesians 6:10-17

Eph. 6:10-17 had a profound impact upon Tertullian's theory of the "miles Christi". Although Tertullian was familiar with Mt. 10:34, 2 Cor. 10:3-4 and 2 Tim. 2:3-4,<sup>32</sup> he employed them far more rarely than the aforesaid verses from Ephesians. Moreover, an examination of Cor. 1:3, 14-22 and Fug. 9:2, 17-22 reveals that they appear at decisive moments within his theory of martyrdom.

"Ibidem grauissimas paenulas posuit, releuari auspicatus, speculatoriam morosissimam de pedibus absoluit, terrae sanctae insistere incipiens, gladium nec dominicae defensionis necessarium reddidit, laurea et de manu caruit: et nunc rufatus sanguinis sui spe, calceatus de euangelii paratura, succinctus acutiore uerbo dei ac totus



de apostolo armatus, ut de martyrii candida laurea melius coronandus donatium Christi in carcere expectat"

(Cor. 1:3, 14-22)

and

"Stare immobiles praecipit - utique nec fuga mobiles - et accinctos ... in fugam an in occursum Euangelii? Arma quoque demonstrat, quae fugituris non essent necessaria, inter quae et clipeum, quo possitis tela diaboli extinguere, resistentes sine dubio et excipientes omnem uim illius"

(Fug. 9:2, 17-22).

Cor. 1:3, 14-22 is designed to answer the doubts within the Christian community at Carthage over the question of whether or not a soldier should publicise his faith by refusing to accept the imperial "donatium". Thus, Cor. 1:4, 22-26 declares -

"exinde sententiae super illo, - nescio an Christianorum; non enim aliae ethnicorum - 'ut de abrupto et praecipiti et mori cupido, qui de habitu interrogatus nomini negotium fecerit, solus scilicet fortis inter tot fratres commilitones, solus Christianus'."

Fug. 9:2, 17-22 forms part of the climax to Tertullian's argument that a command to flee from their persecutors was not included amongst Jesus' commands to the faithful.<sup>33</sup>

For the purpose of determining the extent to which Tertullian regarded the martyr as the "miles Christi", the significance of his exegesis of Eph. 6:10-17 is twofold. It was a Truth-orientated exegesis and a warfare-orientated exegesis.

This is in marked contrast to Origen's exegesis of Eph. 6:10-17 in Mart. Prot. He failed to make any allusion to

Eph. 6:14-17 (the verses in which the Christian's weapons are enumerated and in which the equation with Truth is made) and when he did allude to Eph. 6:12, in Mart. Prot. 48:307, 2-14, he (loyal to his source) interpreted the conflict as an athletic contest, not as a battle. Although extracts such as Arch. IV. 3:187, 31-3:187, 22 and III 2:141, 10-3:142, 14 equate the said weapons with Truth, the former confers them upon Old Testament worthies, the latter upon all the saints irrespective of whether they are or are not martyrs.

According to Cor. 1:3, 19-20, the "armour of God" is essentially the armour of God's Truth. The distinctive feature which marks the prospective martyr is his firm adherence to the Truth of God. That adherence protects the martyr from the wiles of the Devil (be they ever so ingenious) and enables him to defeat him. Indeed, Tertullian did not confine himself to following Eph. 6:17 by arming the martyr with the "word of God"; loyal to Eph. 6:15, he also encased the martyr's feet in the "shoes of the Gospel".<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, in Fug. 9:2, 20-21, from the array of armour listed by Paul, it is the "shield" which he singles out for special mention - the shield which Eph. 6:16 characterises as "the shield of faith". Faith is nothing less than belief in the Revelation of God - belief in the events described by the Gospel.

Tertullian's exposition of Eph. 6:13-17 is not accurate word for word. In Cor. 1:3, 19-20, he conflated Eph. 6:14 and 6:17, with the result that the command that the Christian gird his loins with "truth" became a statement that the martyr is girt with the "word of God".<sup>35</sup> (Eph. 6:17 associates the "word of God" with the "sword of the Spirit"). Therefore, although Cor. 1:3, 19-20 does not specifically repeat the word "gladius", the juxtaposition of that excerpt alongside Cor 1:3, 17-18 suggests that Tertullian's equation of that sword with "truth" (Eph. 6:14) was justified. Nevertheless, it illustrates his readiness to take liberties with the text of Paul where it suited his purpose. Here, the conflation of the two verses means that he could replace the material sword of the soldier with the spiritual sword of the martyr - the sword of idolatry with the sword of Truth.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, although he had only mentioned the shoes of the "Gospel" and the sword of "God's Word", in Cor. 1:3, 19-20, Cor. 1:3, 20 considered that the martyr had been arrayed in the "whole armour of God".

However, instead of detracting from the conclusion that the martyr's chief weapon is his adherence to the Truth, Tertullian's licence in his exegesis of Eph. 6:14-17 reinforces that conclusion. So confident was he that he assumed that the "whole armour of God" can be summarised under the heading of divine Revelation.

Marc. III. 14:3, 9-14:5, 25 declares, not without justification, that the "armour of God" is composed principally of Truth and that the Lord who confers it wields the "sword" of the Divine Word.

Applied to Tertullian's theology of death, his Truth-orientated exegesis of Eph. 6:10-17 reinforced the importance of "confessing" Jesus<sup>37</sup> within his martyr theology and underlines the fact that, as Apol. 50:2, 7-9 saw clearly, the martyr's battle is a battle for the truth.<sup>38</sup>

As for Tertullian's warfare-orientated exegesis of Eph. 6:10-17 it served as yet another reminder to the faithful that martyrdom is mandatory. Fug. 9:2, 19-22 observes that if the faithful had been supposed to flee persecution, they would not have been given weapons -

"arma quoque demonstrat, quae fugituris non essent necessaria, inter quae et clipeum, quo possitis tela diaboli extinguere, resistentes sine dubio et excipientes omnem uim illius".

Cor. 1:3, 20-22 assumes that it is by wielding the sword of Scripture that the martyred soldier will win the true "donatium"<sup>39</sup> the "donatium" granted by Christ. By assuming that it is the wielding of the spiritual sword which wins the martyr his eternal reward, Tertullian reminded the faithful that martyrdom is an obligation. Their weapons are not "ornaments"; they are to be used.

The logic which links weapons and the warrior engaged in active service comes across still more clearly in Fug. 10:1,

4-7. There, he ironically observes that when the call to engage the enemy resounds across the field, it is appropriate for the fully armed "miles Christi" to desert his post! In Tertullian's own words:

"Bonum militem Christo imperatori suo praestat qui tam plene ab apostolo armatus tuba persecutionis audita diem deserit persecutionis!"

The *raison d'être* behind God's granting of armour to the Christian is summed up in Eph. 6:13; he has been granted it in order that he might "stand" firm in the face of the attacks of the forces of evil.<sup>40</sup>

It is pertinent that all three of these references to the martyr's spiritual weapons are located at the sharp end of Tertullian's martyr theology - that is, in exhortations addressed to those who baulked in the face of martyrdom. Evidently, he considered that Eph. 6:13-17 were verses with which he could strike at the consciences of the faithful with a steady hand.

It is true that soldering and warfare are not the only implications of wielding a weapon. In the ancient world, swords and shields also played a prominent role within gladiatorial contests.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, Resurr. 16:8, 33-35 indicates that, in Tertullian's eyes, the principal association of swords is that of war - "et gladius bene de bello cruentus et melior homicida laudem suam consecratione pensabit". Moreover, he never mentioned the divine armour when expounding martyrdom in terms of an athletic contest.

In short, Tertullian's understanding of martyrdom as the duty of the "miles Christi" was firmly grounded in Eph. 6:10-17. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that, in spite of the prominence of his analogies between the secular soldier and the divine soldier (analogies which include their oaths, their standards, their sufferings and their triumphs) it was probably from Eph. 6:10-17 that he drew his principal inspiration for the "miles Christi" motif. Not merely did those verses provide him with the notion that Truth is essentially combative in character, they provided him with Biblical authority for the idea that the Christian is a soldier per se. Given that he was bitterly opposed to secular soldiering,<sup>42</sup> this must have been important.

This does not mean that Tertullian did not take the analogies between secular soldiering and spiritual soldiering seriously. An examination of passages such as Scorp. 4:5, 14-18, Mart. 3:1, 13-3:2, 23 and Pud. 22:11, 47-22:12, 57 reveals that he did. It does mean, however, that he sought those analogies as a result of the authorisation which he had found in Eph. 6:10-17 and not vice versa; his exegesis of Eph. 6:10-17 was not a gloss upon a secular-inspired "miles Christi" motif.

No study of Tertullian's exegesis of Eph. 6:10-17 would be complete, however, without a brief examination of his exegesis of Eph. 6:12. The chief characteristic of that exegesis is its literalism. Making no attempt to allegorise the forces referred to there, he regarded Eph 6:12 as an objective catalogue of the Christian's spiritual foes.



Furthermore, in contrast to certain strands of Jewish angelology, he did not interpret Eph 6:12 in terms of a series of distinct entities within the forces of evil.<sup>43</sup> Instead, he seems to have regarded them as different names for the one phenomenon. Since Marc. V. 18:12, 4-8 distinguishes the "principalities", "powers" and "spiritual hosts of wickedness" from their Devil chieftain, it seems likely that he understood them as the demons and their progenitors, the fallen angels. Although in his exegesis of I Cor. 2:8, Tertullian sometimes included earthly rulers under the term "princes of this world"<sup>44</sup> and such earthly powers played a vital role in encompassing the martyrs' deaths, he never included earthly rulers in his exegesis of Eph. 6:12.

The impact of Eph. 6:12 upon Tertullian's theory of martyrdom was fivefold. Firstly, it highlighted the fact that the spiritual opposition faced by the martyrs is not confined to the Devil. They also have to overcome spiritual opponents who (though subordinate to the Devil) are distinct from him.

Secondly, it warned the martyrs not to underestimate the strength of their opponents; their adversaries are spirits with powers denied to mere men. According to Tertullian, the key message of Eph. 6:12 is "non est nobis luctatio aduersus carnem et sanguinem" - "we are not contending against flesh and blood". The respect which he had for the



danger posed by the Christians' demoniac adversaries is expressed vividly by Ieiun. 17:8, 20-25:

"Sed nostra alia robora aliaque uires, sicut et alia certamina, quibus non est luctatio aduersus carnem et sanguinem, sed aduersus mundi potestates, aduersus spiritalia malitiae. Aduersus haec non carne et sanguine, sed fide et spiritu robusto oportet adsistere."

Thirdly, by enlisting the adjectives "malitia" and "nequitia", it confirmed that the martyrs' opponents are utterly worthless and depraved. Whilst Tertullian did not depend on Eph 6:12 to reach that conclusion (Apol. 23:14, 72-75 basing the argument that demons are unclean upon the fetid sacrifices which they demand) that text played a major role in popularising that idea within his martyr theology.<sup>45</sup>

Fourthly, by assuming that strife and conflict are an integral part of the Christian life, it justified the martyrs' sufferings. This can be demonstrated by Marc. III 14:4, 15-14:5, 22, where he identifies the "sword of the Spirit" (that is, the word of God) with the "strife" which Jesus foretold would be the lot of His followers:

"Quodsi Iohannem agnitum non uis, habes communem magistrum Paulum, praecingentem lumbos nostros ueritate et lorica iustitiae et calciantem nos praeparationem euangelii pacis, non belli, adsumere iubentem scutum fidei, in quo possimus omnia diaboli ignita tela extinguere, et galeam salutaris et gladium spiritus, quod est, inquit, dei sermo. Hanc et dominus ipse machaeram uenit mittere in terram, non pacem."

Because its demands are total, the Gospel stirs up intense passions amongst men - some positive, some negative. An exponent of that Gospel, the Christian will encounter

passionate hatred and bitter antagonism from non-believers. Therefore, because the evangelisation of the world is part of the divine plan<sup>46</sup> the strife and the suffering which accompany that evangelisation are part of that plan too.<sup>47</sup>

Fifthly, it is one of the most important Biblical foundations for martyrdom as an athletic contest. It is from Eph. 6:12 that Fug. 1:5, 37-40 and Ieiun. 17:8, 20-25 drew their inspiration for martyrdom as a wrestling-match ("luctatio") with the powers of evil. Moreover, in keeping with the Biblical text itself, Tertullian primarily confined his allusions to the "principalities" and "powers" of Eph. 6:12 to the sphere of martyrdom as an athletic contest.<sup>48</sup>

Nonetheless, Marc. V. 18:12, 4-8 with its juxtaposition of those powers and the divine armour, is a warning against confining his exegesis of that text too rigidly to that sphere:

"Porro, cum supra quidem induere nos iubeat armaturam, in qua stemus ad machinationes diaboli, iam ostendit diaboli esse quae diabolo subiungit, potestates et munditenebras tenebrarum istarum, quae et nos diabolo deputamus."

For the shaping of Tertullian's martyr theology, Eph. 6:12 was plainly a vital text - determining to a large extent, as it did, his understanding of both the martyrs' opponents and their conflict with them. Indeed, the text was so important within his martyr theology that when his exposition of Eph. 6:13-17 is taken into account, it would not be too much to claim that his theory of demonic combat is primarily an Ephesians-orientated theory.

#### 4.1.3 Two "camps" - two "kingdoms" - one loyalty

"Non conuenit sacramento diuino et humano, signo Christi et signo diaboli, castris lucis et castris tenebrarum; non potest una anima duobus deberi, deo et Caesari".

Although Idol. 19:2, 14-17 does not deal with martyrdom directly (its acknowledged purpose being to castigate secular military service) it throws light on the moral dualism which lies at the heart of Tertullianic morality. The Christian "cannot serve two masters".<sup>49</sup> To yield to temptation is to submit to the thralldom of the Devil and to become his property.<sup>50</sup>

Present in such works as Barn. Ep. and Herm. Past., moral dualism can be traced back to the teachings of Qumran.<sup>51</sup> However, whilst Tertullian had read both Barn Ep. and Herm. Past.,<sup>52</sup> the principal source for his moral dualism was probably the Bible. By setting the "camp of light" over against the "camp of darkness"<sup>53</sup> submission to God over against submission to Caesar, he reproduced the dichotomy of 2 Cor. 6:14-16 - the dichotomy between righteousness and iniquity, light and darkness, Christ and Belial.

In the hands of Tertullian, the metaphor of the two "kingdoms" took an interesting form. In line with the Qumran tradition, Barn. Ep. and Herm. Past. had described the choice before the Christian in terms of a choice between two "ways".<sup>54</sup> Barn. Ep. 18:1a-c teaches that the "way of light" is governed by the angels of God whereas the "way of

darkness" is governed by the angels of Satan. Characterising the "way of darkness", Barn. Ep. 20:1a-c asserts:

"Ἡ δὲ τοῦ μέλανος ὁδὸς ἐστὶν σκολιὰ καὶ κατάρσος μεστή. Ὅλως γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁδὸς θανάτου αἰωνίου μετὰ τιμωρίας, ἐν ᾗ ἐστὶν τὰ ἀπολλύντια τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν· εἰδωλολατρεία, θρασυτήρ, ὕψος δυνάμεως, ὑπόκρισις, διπλοκαρδία, μοιχεία, φόνος, ἄρπαγή, ὑπερηφάνια, παράβασις, δόλος, κακία, αὐθάδεια, φαρμακεία, μαγεία, πλεονεξία, ἀφοβία θεοῦ."

Tertullian understood the Christian's competing loyalties in terms of two mutually antagonistic "camps".

Perorations designed to dissuade the faithful from joining the secular army, Tertullian's choice of the word "castris" in Idol. 19:2, 14-17 and Cor. 11:4, 26-27 may have been partially caused by the logical demands of his immediate argument ("camps" were an important part of army life"). However, his choice of metaphor should not be dismissed too blithely. Spect. 24:4, 13-17 is a reminder that he employed the word "castris" with reference to the "two ways" facing the Christian outwith his castigation of secular soldiering:

"Itaque negat manifeste qui per quod agnoscitur tollit. Quid autem spei superest in eiusmodi homine? Nemo in castra hostium transit nisi proiectis armis suis, nisi destitutis signis et sacramentis principis sui, nisi pactus simul perire."

By employing the metaphor of the "two camps" rather than that of the "two ways", Tertullian reminded the faithful that they are men under authority (from whom absolute loyalty and obedience are due). The metaphor of the "two

ways" by contrast, whilst extolling absolute loyalty, had emphasised individual free choice.<sup>55</sup>

Transposed to his theology of martyrdom, the "camps" metaphor reminds the faithful that acceptance of the call to martyrdom is mandatory. It also highlights the fact that there must be no half-measure in the martyr's response; martyrdom and apostasy are absolutes.

Finally, the "two camps" motif reminds Christians that idolatry constitutes both the chief danger posed to the martyr and the chief target of the martyr.<sup>56</sup> According to Tertullian, life in the Roman army was permeated with idolatry. Amongst the idolatrous practices, Cor. 11:3, 14-24 included the veneration of the legion's standard, the need to attend pagan banquets and the duty to guard temples.

Moreover, the very formulation of Idol. 19:2, 14-17 is significant; that extract sets Caesar over against Christ (not Belial). Tertullian's divergence from 2 Cor. 6:16 should not be dismissed simply as the logical consequence of the fact that the Emperor was the supreme head of the army. Not merely was he also "Pontifex Maximus",<sup>57</sup> his "genius" was the object of veneration.<sup>58</sup> Since the Emperor was so closely associated with idolatry and their refusal to acknowledge his "divine" status was the reason for the martyrs' presence in the arena,<sup>59</sup> the substitution of the word "Caesar" for the word "Belial" must have been highly evocative of idolatry in the eyes of third century Carthagian Christians.

#### 4.1.4 The martyr as divine athlete

A review of Spect. reveals that Tertullian was bitterly opposed to Christians participating in pagan spectacles. Under that heading, he included not merely the gladiatorial contest with all its cruelty and bloodshed but also the various athletic events with their preoccupation with physical prowess.<sup>60</sup> He condemned spectacles on the grounds that they participated in idolatry, disturbed the passions and distorted the natural bodily form<sup>61</sup> (the phrase employed of the latter is the "imago dei").<sup>62</sup> Rambaux states:

"Son but est donc de prouver aux chrétiens récalcitrants que la condamnation de tous les spectacles est conforme à l'esprit de la Révélation, et de leur faire admettre ainsi la nécessité d'un renoncement total."<sup>63</sup>

Yet, despite his opposition to spectacles, Tertullian employed metaphors drawn from them to describe martyrdom. Although he never actually used the word "athleta" to denote the martyr,<sup>64</sup> he did cast the martyr in that role. Associated with martyrdom, "agon" appears in his works eight times and "certamen" appears ten times.<sup>65</sup> He even designated martyrdom a "spectaculum".<sup>66</sup>

The martyr's role as divine athlete - an athlete competing in the contest of all contests - finds clear expression in Mart. 3:3, 23-26:

"Bonum agonem subituri estis in quo agonothe-  
tes deus uiuus est, xystarches spiritus sanctus,  
corona aeternitatis, brabium angelicae



substantiae, politia in caelis, gloria in saecula saeculorum."

Whilst Tertullian derived many of his athletic metaphors from the Bible,<sup>67</sup> he was also influenced by classical athletic contests. L. Robert has demonstrated the impact of Greek-style oecumenical contests (notably, the pythian games) upon the Pass. Perp:

"On a parlé pour cette vision d'une 'imagerie païenne'; il faut être beaucoup plus précis: l'imagerie d'un concours grec de premier rang. Les souvenirs de la prestigieuse parade des Pythia oecuméniques célébrées alors pour la première fois à Carthage ont habillé toute la vision de Perpétue, récente convertie, pour le combat qu'elle allait livrer contre le Diable. Elle avait foulé de ses pieds la tête du pancratiaste égyptien diabolique; elle avait reçu le rameau de victoire aux pommes d'or des mains du Christ agonothète; 'la paix soit avec toi, ma fille'."<sup>68</sup>

Taking this as my starting point, I shall attempt to throw new light upon Tertullian's understanding of martyrdom by reading his allusions to the martyr's "contest" in the light of its classical prototypes.

#### 4.1.4.1 The contribution of the "agon" motif

In order that his bodily strength might be brought to a peak, the secular athlete who aspired to compete regularly underwent strenuous exercise at the gymnasium and submitted himself to a special diet. Noting the observations of Plato, D.G. Kyle observes -

"the Guardians were to exercise to promote the spiritual side of their nature, unlike contemporary athletes who pursue diet and exercise for the sake of physical strength (ῥώμης ἕνεκα σῦντα καὶ πόνοῦς μεταχειρίζεται)." <sup>69</sup>

According to Tertullian, the divine athlete too receives a special diet, a spartan one and has his body but more particularly his soul exercised by hardship. To quote Mart. 3:4, 29-3:5, 9:

"Nempe enim et athletae segregantur ad strictiorem disciplinam, ut robori aedificando uacent. Continentur a luxuria, a cibis laetioribus, a potu iucundiore. Coguntur, cruciantur, fatigantur: quanto plus in exercitationibus laborauerint, tanto plus de uictoria sperant. Et illi, inquit Apostolus, ut coronam corruptibilem consequantur. Nos aeternam consecuturi carcerem nobis pro palaestra interpretamur, ut ad stadium tribunalis bene exercitati incommodis omnibus producamur, quia uirtus duritia exstruitur, mollitia uero destruitur."

Applied to Tertullian's understanding of death, the prison as a "palaestra" teaches the Christian that spiritual strength and spiritual skill are essential prerequisites for the martyr's death. This is in keeping with Mart. 4:1, 12-4:3, 22, where discussing Mt. 26:41, he extolls spiritual strength:

"Propterea enim praedixit spiritum promptum, ut ostenderet, quid cui debeat esse subiectum, scilicet, ut caro seruiat spiritui, infirmior fortiori, ut ab eo etiam ipsa fortitudinem assumat. Colloquatur spiritus cum carne de communi salute, nec iam de incommodis carceris, sed de ipso agone et proelio cogitans. Timebit forsitan caro gladium grauem, et crucem excelsam, et rabiem bestiarum, et summam ignium poenam, et omne carnificis ingenium in tormentis. Sed spiritus contra ponat sibi et carni: acerba licet ista, a multis tamen aequo animo excepta, immo et ultro appetita, famae et gloriae causa".

Thus, from the metaphor of the divine "palaestra", it is only a short step to the conclusion that martyrdom is a trial of spiritual strength and skill.

The aforesaid metaphor also teaches the Christian that the martyr's death is something for which he must prepare during life. Cult. II. 13:3, 15-13:4, 25 was indeed justified in questioning whether women who accustom themselves to riches and luxury will be able to tolerate the agonies which accompany confession of Jesus and Ieiun. 12:2, 13-27 in concluding that without the self-discipline of xerophany, Christians will find it difficult to cope with the demands of martyrdom. The martyr's death bears the peculiar imprint of his life and indeed is foreshadowed in it.

For the purpose of determining the contribution of the "palaestra" motif to Tertullian's understanding of martyrdom, it is probably not very important that his use of that motif was somewhat opportunistic - focussing as Mart. 3:4, 29-3:5, 9 does upon those secular athletes who were obliged to eschew rich foods<sup>70</sup> and ignoring those who were subject to a high-protein, body building diet.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, focussing as it does upon the confessor's acquisition of spiritual strength, the discrepancy between the prison depicted by Resurr. 8:5, 19-23 and Pat. 13:6, 22-25<sup>72</sup> (the prison which shatters martyrs' physical strength) and the classical "palaestra" (the place where physical strength is augmented) is probably less important than it might first appear.

What is important is that, in contrast to the motif of the military route-march, the motif of athletic training emphasises the prospective martyr's acquisition of skill and strength;<sup>73</sup> the motif of the route-march has as its

connotations the building up of his powers of endurance.<sup>74</sup> The difference of nuance has its origin in the contrast between the training of secular athletes and secular soldiers.

The difference of nuance is indeed a small one. Nevertheless, endurance seems to be a slightly less positive quality than either strength or skill and therefore the athletic metaphor serves to remind the faithful that the martyr's sufferings and his ultimate death are a positive phenomenon. I would go further. By emphasising the martyr's personal strength (as opposed to the strength which the Spirit confers upon him)<sup>75</sup> the said metaphor underlines the fact that the death of the martyr is the death of a spiritually "accomplished" (that is, spiritually mature) man.

Of course, Mart. 4:4, 26-29 with its allusion to Christ anointing the prospective martyrs with His Spirit illustrates that the martyrs' personal strength and the strength which is conferred upon them are intimately related. Nonetheless, this emphasis upon the martyr's own contribution is valuable.

Scorp. 6:6, 5-13, Mart. 3:3, 23-26 and Fug. 1:5, 37-45 depict martyrdom as the ultimate contest - a contest called by the Almighty Himself. The metaphor of the public show (like that of the divine army) had the virtue of involving the Christian's God intimately and inescapably in the events which led to the martyr's death. Public games each had a

superintendent and competitors each possessed a trainer.<sup>76</sup> The Superintendent ("agonothetes") of these games was none other than God the Father.<sup>77</sup> The Overseer ("epistates") is Christ<sup>78</sup> and the Director of the training gallery ("xystarches") is the Holy Spirit.<sup>79</sup> To quote Fug. 1:5, 40-45:

"Ita agnosces ad eundem agonithetam pertinere certaminis arbitrium, qui inuitat ad praemium. Totum, quod agitur in persecutione, gloria dei est, probantis et reprobantis, imponentis et deponentis. Quod autem ad gloriam dei pertinet, utique ex uoluntate illius eueniet."

The effect upon Tertullian's theology of death is threefold. It underlines the fact that the martyr's death is a God-orientated death - directed as it is towards the approval of the divine "agonothetes". It reminds the Christian that martyrdom is truly in accordance with the will of God. Since the Almighty calls the contest, judges the performances and awards the prizes,<sup>80</sup> He cannot evade responsibility for the martyrs' deaths. Finally, according as it does a role to trainers, the metaphor of the athletic contest highlights the fact that the God who calls the contest also, in the form of the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity, enables the martyrs to comply with the challenge. Martyrdom is not a solitary death; the martyr's God will never forsake him.

The actual act of competing in an athletic competition has two implications - that the relative abilities of the contestants will be tested and that the competitors unremittingly strain towards ever higher standards of



personal excellence. The emphasis is upon the individual's subjugation of his physical and mental frailty to his pursuit of excellence; the rivalry of contestants is secondary.

To take the latter's implication first, when imported into Tertullian's theology of martyrdom, the stress in the "agon" motif upon the martyr's duty to pursue personal excellence reminded the Christian that without intense effort and self-discipline,<sup>81</sup> he will never overcome either his human or his supernatural foes. Thus, martyrdom is per se a meritorious act. Moreover, the "agon" motif confirms the conclusion arrived at earlier (with reference to athletic training) that the martyr's death is the death of a 'spiritually' disciplined, spiritually "accomplished" man.

Nevertheless, the principal consequence of Tertullian's equation of martyrdom with the act of competing itself was probably to remind the prospective martyr that it is his strength relative to that of the powers of evil which will be tested in the arena.<sup>82</sup> Thus, in Marc. II 10:6, 3-9, Tertullian envisaged the martyr's death as the act whereby he subjugates the Devil:

"Certamini enim dedit spatium, ut et homo eadem arbitrii libertate elideret inimicum, qua succiderat illi, probans suam, non dei culpam, et ita salutem digne per uictoriam recuperaret, et diabolus amarius puniretur ab eo, quem eliserat ante, deuictus, et deus tanto magis bonus inueniretur, sustinens hominem gloriosiore in paradisu ad licentiam decerpendae arboris uitae iam de uita regressurum."



Despite the fact that Fug. 1:4, 27-34 and Scorp. 6:6, 5-10 appear superficially to weigh up the respective merits of the Christian brethren - the former declaring that God uses martyrdom to separate the "wheat" from the "tares",<sup>83</sup> the latter declaring that He will grant some men "citizenship" and others "ignominy"<sup>84</sup> - Tertullian never lost sight of the fact that the martyrs' opponents were spiritual ones. The martyr is rewarded for the sake of his own merits - not for having been more meritorious than his fellow competitors. He runs against the Devil and his minions; he does not run against his fellow Christians.

Applied to martyr theology, the "agon" motif illustrated in vivid pictorial form the fact that martyrdom is a trial of strength. It also illustrated the fact that the martyr's death is a hurdle which the Christian "athlete" must clear if he is to win the heavenly reward.

Having depicted the prospective martyr as an athlete in training and martyrdom as athletic competition, Tertullian completed the sporting imagery by depicting the martyr as a triumphant athlete. The successful secular athlete has his brow wreathed with a crown;<sup>85</sup> the successful divine athlete will have his brow so adorned.<sup>86</sup> Mart. 3:3, 24-26 confers upon the martyr the "crown" of eternity, the "prize" of angelic substance and "citizenship" of Heaven - "corona aeternitatis, brabium angelicae substantiae, politia in caelis, gloria in saecula saeculorum".

This does not mean that crowns were exclusively an athletic device.<sup>87</sup> Cor. 1:3, 20-22 set the martyr's crown in an overtly military context by designating it the "white laurel-crown of martyrdom" (a deliberate allusion to the laurel-crown which the martyred soldier had rejected) and by juxtaposing it alongside the true largesse. "Ut de martyrii candida laurea melius coronandus donatium Christi in carcere expectat." It does mean, however, that crowns were intimately associated with athletic competition and that whether the context be athletic or military, their connotations are those of victory.

Crowns are not the only symbols of victory which Tertullian transposed into martyr theology. Scorp. 6:6, 8-9 declares that the divine athlete will be granted either a palm branch or a palm wreath ("palma").<sup>88</sup> Mart. 3:3, 25 and Scorp. 6:6, 8-9 proclaim that he will also be granted the ultimate citizenship - citizenship of Heaven. Citizenship had sometimes been granted to secular athletes as a special privilege.<sup>89</sup>

Transposed into martyr theology, these symbols of victory served to underline the fact that though his body be broken, the martyr's death is not a defeat but rather a triumph. It also served to underline the fact that the martyr's death is not the end of his story; there will be another life after death - a life in which the martyr's sufferings will be recognised and recompensed, a life of honour and bliss.

The one component of the classical spectacle which Tertullian did not successfully embody in his theology of martyrdom was the audience. The interjections of the audience played a vital role in classical games.<sup>90</sup> Yet, despite the importance of the onlookers for any witness-orientated understanding of martyrdom, Scorp. 6:6, 5-13 (the sole occasion upon which Tertullian alluded to the audience at the divine "agon") makes no effort to exploit the human audience's sole as witnesses to the martyr's death and focusses instead upon the spiritual witnesses. I quote:

"Deum dedecebit artes et disciplinas suas educere in medium, in hoc saeculi spatium, in spectaculum hominibus et angelis et uniuersis potestatibus? Carnem atque animam probare de constantia atque tolerantia? Dare huic palmam, huic honorem, illi ciuitatem, illi stipendia? Etiam quosdam reprobare et castigatos cum ignominia submouere? Nimirum praescribis deo, quibus temporibus aut modis aut locis de familia sua iudicet, quasi non et praeiudicare iudici congruat."

Whilst Tertullian's failure to exploit the potential of the audience at the divine spectacle probably owed much to the fact that the audiences at its classical counterparts were foremost in calling for the deaths of Christians,<sup>91</sup> it must leave yet another question-mark against the depth of his adhesion to martyrdom as a teaching medium.

#### 4.1.4.2 The contribution of motifs drawn from specific sports

Within the classical world, spectacles assumed a variety of forms. Prominent amongst these are running<sup>92</sup>, wrestling,<sup>93</sup> boxing,<sup>94</sup> the gladiatorial combat<sup>95</sup>, chariot racing<sup>96</sup> and

the pankration.<sup>97</sup> The distinctive characteristics of some of these sports left their impact on Tertullian's theology of martyrdom.

Tertullian appears to have described martyrdom in terms of a divine "pankration". Distinguished by blows by the feet to the head, the "pankration" combined many of the salient features of both ancient boxing and wrestling.<sup>98</sup> Thus, it is probably significant that Scorp. 6:1, 3-9 asserts that the martyr will strike ("elidere") and tread upon ("inculcare") the Devil:

"Sed si certaminis nomine deus nobis matyria proposuisset, per quae cum aduersario experiremur, ut, a quo libenter homo elisus est, eum iam constanter elidat, hic quoque liberalitas magis quam acerbitas dei praeest. Euulsum enim hominem de diaboli gula per fidem iam et per uirtutem inculcatorem eius uoluit efficere, ne solummodo euasisset, uerum etiam euicisset inimicum".

This extract bears marked similarity to Pass. Perp. 10:10, 13-10:11, 19, where Perpetua's vision of her contest with the diabolic Egyptian is recorded. Striking out with fists and heels, she forced his face down into the sand and she trampled upon him:

"Et accessimus ad inuicem et coepimus mittere pugnos. Ille mihi pedes adprehendere uolebat; ego autem illi calcibus faciem caedebam. Et sublata sum in aere et coepi eum sic caedere quasi terram non calcans. At ubi uidi moram fieri, iunxi manus ut digitos in digitos mitterem et apprehendi illi caput; et cecidit in faciem et calcaui illi caput."

Seeking the inspiration for Perpetua's vision, Robert finds it in the techniques beloved by classical pankratiasts':

"La scène a lieu dans l'amphithéâtre; c'est naturel, puisque Perpétue est destinée à 'combattre' et à périr dans l'amphithéâtre. Trompés sans doute, par ce fait et par la mention du 'lanista dans la version latine, certains ont cru que le combat, dans la vision de Perpétue, était un combat de gladiateurs. C'est une lutte à la grecque. Le texte latin dit vaguement: 'et accessimus ad inuicem et coepimus mittere pugnos'; la version originale dit exactement: προσήλθομεν δὲ ἀλλήλους καὶ ἤρξαμεθα παγκρατίζειν. 'Comme chacun sait, le pancrace est un mélange de lutte et de boxe (boxe sans les terribles cestes) où tous les coups sont permis. Il n'y a pas d'équipement de gladiateurs. Le combat a lieu à mains nues. Simplement Perpétue est déshabillée et elle devient homme comme il est indispensable pour ce combat athlétique. Il n'y a pas à évoquer ici des spéculations gnostiques sur les sexes. De même, ses partisans lui font une onction d'huile normale pour ce genre de combat, non pour des gladiateurs."99

If Pass Perp. 10:10, 13-10:11, 19 should indeed be properly understood in terms of a "pankration" held under divine auspices, would it not be reasonable to conclude that Scorp. 6:1, 3-9 should be similarly interpreted?

Although Tertullian never employed the word "pankration" itself in his works, Spect. 18:1, 1-5 with its denunciation of punches, kicks and blows which result in the disfigurement of the "divine image" seem to have that sport particularly in mind:

"Quodsi stadium contendas in scripturis nominari, sane obtinebis. Sed quae in stadio geruntur, indigna conspectu tuo non negabis, pugnos et calces et colaphos et omnem petulantiam manus et quamcumque humani oris, id est diuinae imaginis, depugnationem".

There may be a corresponding allusion to the "pankration" in Scorp. 6:3, 19, where the "butting" of heels is mentioned as a cause of wounds in classical spectacles.

The Greek "pankration" was distinguished by its unrestrained violence. Philostratos described the pankratiasts' art as follows:

"(Pankratiasts) must employ backward falls which are not safe for the wrestler ... they must have skill in various methods of strangling; they also wrestle with an opponent's ankle and twist his arm, besides hitting and jumping on him, for all these practices belong to the pankration, only biting and gouging being excepted."<sup>100</sup>

Moreover, even that embargo was frequently ignored - to quote J. Swaddling,

"although gouging and biting were forbidden, scenes on pottery show that pankratiasts often tried to get away with both."

She continues -

"in his parody of the Olympic games, Galen, a Roman physician of the third century A.D., awards the prize for the pankration to the donkey since it was the best of all animals at kicking."<sup>101</sup>

Thus, whilst the pankration required skill as well as "brute strength",<sup>102</sup> the emphasis was upon the overcoming of one's opponent by any means.

Incorporated into Tertullian's theology of martyrdom, the "pankration" motif illustrates that martyrdom is marked by extreme violence, intense ruthlessness and even ferocity; the martyr can expect no quarter from Satan and can afford to give none in return. The martyr's "pankration" with the Devil may call for skill on the part of the human contestant but it is primarily a primitive trial of strength. The "pankration" motif also reminds the faithful that martyrdom



is often a blood-wrung death; the martyr is badly mauled by his opponent and undergoes terrible suffering.

The martyr's purpose in entering this contest with the powers of evil is a holy one, that is, the desire to fulfil the will of his Master.<sup>103</sup> Nonetheless, although some Christians may have found the connotations of martyrdom as a "pankration" positive - the metaphor implying challenge and excitement - many must have been partially repelled by it. It was an uncomfortable reminder that the God of Tertullian, the God of Scorp. 6:11, 19-23 and 7:7, 7-11<sup>104</sup>, is a savage God when the occasion demands.

However, even if Scorp. 6:1, 3-9 is interpreted in terms of a divine boxing-match (ancient boxing being characterised by severe blows to the head) and Scorp. 6:1, 6-9 is dismissed as simply a distortion introduced by Tertullian's desire to adhere firmly to Gen. 3:15, the inference that martyrdom is an extremely violent, ruthless, even ferocious death still holds good. Indeed, it would be yet more pronounced.

Ancient boxing was characterised by ruthlessness and ferocity. Some scholars have branded it as a brutal sport.<sup>105</sup> This ferocity was particularly to the fore in the Roman style of boxing, where contestants wore the "caestus" - a glove whose thongs were "loaded with lead and fitted with projecting spikes."<sup>106</sup> Classified as a "fearsome" weapon by H.A. Harris,<sup>107</sup> the "caestus" is described by J. Swaddling as "vicious".<sup>108</sup> Harris goes so far as to

conclude that the development of Roman style boxing was governed by the spectator's "blood-lust".<sup>109</sup>

The secular boxer was uncompromising in his pursuit of victory. All manner of blows by the hand were permissible.<sup>110</sup> Gouging with the thumbs was not permitted. Moreover, since the principal target was the head<sup>111</sup> - an extremely vulnerable spot - serious injuries and disfigurements were not uncommon.<sup>112</sup>

J.P. Thuillier has characterised Etruscan boxing (an important source for Roman boxing) as "dangerous", "savage" and "bloody":

"En effet, nous l'avons dit, il y a toute une tendance de la boxe antique qui veut, qui exige que celle-ci reste quelque chose de très dangereux, de sauvage, de sanglant. Et c'est même la tendance principale ... Mais dès les origines, c'est la violence sanglante qui a dominé ... Et puis bien après, l'apparition du ceste 'lourd' et surtout celle du ceste utilisé à Rome ne laissent aucun doute sur la question : de tels cestés sont des armes terrifiantes et meurtrières. Et ce que nous avons dit plus haut de la technique pugilistique employée dans l'Antiquité renforce cette idée: le fait de ne frapper qu'au visage montre que l'essentiel était de défigurer l'adversaire, de le blesser sauvagement, au point apparemment le plus sensible."<sup>113</sup>

Boxing was no more than a legalised brawl -

"on pourrait même dire que le combat sauvage, la bagarre de rues se transforment en sport, en jeu athlétique, à partir du moment où les poings nus ne sont plus admis."<sup>114</sup>

Tertullian recognised that boxing was a ruthless and ferocious sport. Not merely does he give an extremely realistic description of the boxer's hideously disfigured

face (in Spect 23:7, 23-27), he categorised the boxer's trade in Scorp. 6:4, 22-23 as that of weals, blood and bruises.

The case for arguing that, in Scorp. 6:1, 3-9, Tertullian was referring to a divine boxing-match may find support from the fact that a few lines later, in Scorp. 6:3, 18 and 6:5, 1-3, he gave boxers special mention when seeking to highlight the analogies between the divine contest and its human counterparts. To quote Scorp. 6:5, 1-3 -

"pyctes ipse non queritur dolere se, nam uult;  
corona premit uulnera, palma sanguinem obscurat;  
plus uictoria tumet quam iniuria".

It may also be significant that, in practice, ancient boxing may not have been entirely devoid of kicking.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, although Scorp. 6:1, 3-9 should probably be interpreted in terms of a divine "pankration", the case for such an interpretation is not entirely watertight and Tertullian's concept of martyrdom may indeed have been coloured by his memories of ancient boxing.

However, the Tertullianic martyr was not merely, in all probability, a divine pankratiast; he was also a divine wrestler. Reproducing the teaching of Eph. 6:12, both Ieiun. 17:8, 20-23 and Fug. 1:5, 37-40 cast the martyr in the role of competitor in a wrestling match. The latter declares:

"Legis edictum agonis istius in Apocalypsi, quibus praemiis ad uictoriam inuitet, uel maxime illos, qui proprie uicerint in persecutione, uincendo luctati re uera non aduersus carnem et sanguinem, sed aduersus spiritalia nequitiae."

The wrestling motif also appears in Mart. 3:5, 7, where Tertullian called prison a "palaestra" - a wrestling school.

Although almost all his allusions to martyrdom as a wrestling-match took the form of direct citations of Eph. 6:12, he must have recognised that his readers would have come with preconceptions based upon their memories of ancient wrestling. Since in Ieiun. 17:8, 23-25 he informed them that (in contrast to secular wrestling) divine wrestling demands spiritual rather than physical strength, it seems reasonable to conclude that he intended to take on board those associations which he did not correct.

In the classical world, wrestling was a sport which demanded skill, just as much as it demanded strength. Thus, whilst "there was no weight distinction in any of the contests and consequently the biggest men tended to win",<sup>116</sup> Swaddling goes so far as to declare of wrestling that "with professional tuition unarmed combat became almost an art".<sup>117</sup>

Body-holds were an integral part of secular wrestling too. Describing common technique within classical wrestling, Harris states:

"There were two tactical approaches to wrestling. In the first, the wrestler attempted to seize the hands, wrists or arms of his opponent and to throw him by a sudden twist; this was called "akrocheirismos". In the second, he came into close quarters and tried to secure a hold on the body."<sup>118</sup>

A second century trainer's move by move instructions to two of his trainees reveals the extent to which classical wrestling was a contact sport.<sup>119</sup>

Applied to martyrdom, the wrestling motif should have meant that the martyr's death was not merely the death of a spiritually strong man but also that of a spiritually adept man. Indeed, some of Tertullian's readers may have picked up this inference. However, his own exposition of divine wrestling put the accent upon the martyr's spiritual strength - to quote Ieiun. 17:8, 23-25, "aduersus haec non carne et sanguine, sed fide et spiritu robusto oportet adsistere". By so doing, he reminded his readers that martyrdom is an agonising death.

The wrestling motif also served to highlight the immediacy of the threat posed to the martyr by the Devil and his minions. Endowed with a spiritual corporeality,<sup>120</sup> the powers of evil did not simply grasp the Christian's body - they sought to grasp his soul.<sup>121</sup> Their aim was to immobilise the candidate for martyrdom in a deadly grip (the grip of fear) thereby forcing him down upon the ground of apostasy. Like their human counterparts who included tripping their opponents amongst their repertoire,<sup>122</sup> the demoniac wrestlers were prepared to use any ploy to trip up the martyr. If the image of martyrdom as a "pankration" underlined the ferocity of the attack perpetrated by the powers of evil, the image of a wrestling-match highlighted the insidious danger which that attack posed. Whatever the conscious intention of the aspiring martyr, no martyr's

triumph over the evil one is certain until death supervenes. Because the danger of his courage failing him is present to the very end, the martyr's dying moments are extremely dangerous ones.

Finally, as Spect. 18:3, 9-12 appreciated, the very movements of the wrestler's art were peculiarly suited to denoting any conflict in which the Serpent participated. Was the Devil not notorious for the firm grip with which he held his prey? Where not the wrestler's rippling muscles and ever-circling movements evocative of the undulations of the Serpent? Therefore, although Tertullian never overtly mentioned the Devil in his expositions of martyrdom as a wrestling-match, the said motif must have reminded the faithful that beyond the demons lay the martyrs' ultimate foe - the Devil, the very prince of the powers of the air.<sup>123</sup>

Martyrdom as a wrestling match with the forces of evil has its ironic side. According to Spect. 18:3, 9-12, the first practitioner of the secular wrestler's art was the Devil:

"Et palaestrica diaboli negotium est: primos homines diabolus elisit. Ipse gestus colubrina uis est, tenax ad occupandum, tortuosa ad obligandum, liquida ad elabendum."

In the guise of the serpent, Satan had circled round man, taken him in a deadly grip and, morally at least, thrown him to the ground.

Tertullian would have appreciated the irony. Was it not appropriate that the Devil should be overcome by means of



the very art by which he had overcome Adam? The being who had taken Eve in such a deadly grip would now himself be so taken.

In contrast to the martyr as divine pankriast, the martyr as divine wrestler was probably not greatly handicapped by negative associations derived from his secular forebears. Whilst the connotations of spiritual wrestling were such as to inspire the Christian with respect, they were unlikely to inspire him with repugnance.

Having considered the descriptions of the martyr's "agon" which were exploited successfully by Tertullian, consideration must now be given to those which were not so exploited. According to Scorp. 13:10, 18-22, the martyr has completed the ultimate race - the race of faith:

"'Ego enim libor iam, et tempus diiunctionis instat; agonem bonum decertavi, cursum consummaui, fidem custodiui; superest corona, quam mihi dominus illa die reddet', scilicet passionis."

This was, however, the only occasion on which he called martyrdom "a race". In his exegesis of 2 Tim 4:7-8, he preferred to focus upon the crowning of the victorious martyr.<sup>124</sup>

In a secular race, the accent is upon the competitor's skill and personal fitness.<sup>125</sup> Therefore, had Tertullian exploited the metaphor of the divine race, he could have reinforced the conclusion reached earlier that martyrdom is the act of a spiritually disciplined, spiritually mature man. That he did not do so probably owed less to a fear of

detracting from the role of the Spirit (by overemphasising the contribution of man) than to the fact that the metaphor of the race is a poor medium for expressing the rivalry which prevails between the martyr and the powers of evil. In contrast to those of the pankratiast and the wrestler, the movements of the runner do not exude mutual hostility.

As for the gladiatorial contest and the circus, these motifs did not appear in Tertullian's theology of martyrdom at all. Had he employed it, the gladiatorial motif would have reinforced still further the sense that the martyr's death is marked by bitter hostility towards the powers of evil. It would also have reinforced the idea that his death is a violent, even barbarous one.<sup>126</sup> However, for Tertullian, the quasi-gladiatorial role of the martyr was one which was imposed by pagan judges;<sup>127</sup> it was not part of Christians' own self-understanding.

Similarly, the idea that the martyr was a participant in a divine circus might have underlined the fact that the call to martyrdom is a challenge and that the final result of the martyr's death is uncertain to the very last moment - will he or will he not succeed in overcoming his spiritual opponents? It might also have been exploited to remind Christians that martyrdom often has an exciting impact upon those who behold it. However, whilst Spect. 29:3, 10-17 does superficially allude to martyrdom within the context of a Christianised circus, it was done in order to substitute permissible sources of excitement (such as defending the Faith and awaiting the Parousia) for a prohibited source.

It was not intended as a serious attempt to comprehend the inner meaning of martyrdom.

To sum up, Tertullian's allusions to specific sporting metaphors had both positive and negative connotations for his theology of martyrdom. On the one hand, they imbued that theology with a sense of the difficulty of the task facing the martyr. On the other hand, they imbued it with a recognition of the violent, even barbarous character of the martyr's death. Rambaux rightly observes:

"En dehors du *De spectaculis*, dans le *Scorpiace*, Tertullien fait l'éloge d'un autre spectacle: celui que les chrétiens peuvent offrir eux-mêmes par leur martyre aux hommes, aux anges et à toutes les puissances. Il sait que, si ses lecteurs ne répugnent pas à contempler les atrocités de l'amphithéâtre, ils sont plus portés à accuser Dieu qu'à se réjouir quand ils doivent eux mêmes subir de telles atrocités par leur martyre. C'est pourquoi il entreprend de justifier Dieu en leur montrant le caractère salubre d'un tel spectacle, d'une façon qui rappelle celle dont il avait justifié Dieu, dans le *De patientia*, de se réjouir des souffrances de Job. La convergence de ces textes du *De spectaculis*, du *De patientia* et du *Scorpiace* montre à quel point il était difficile, même pour un homme comme Tertullien, de se libérer du sadisme qu'il reprochait aux spectateurs de l'amphithéâtre. L'adhésion au christianisme ne suffit pas à résoudre tous les problèmes.<sup>128</sup>

The product of a particular epoch, the Tertullianic version of martyrdom as "contest" must be read in the light of that period. Its negative connotations should not be dismissed or explained away; they are as integral to its true meaning as the positive ones.

#### 4.1.5 Martyrdom as a Recapitulation of the Fall

When seeking to discover the ultimate meaning of the martyr's contest, both Scorp. 6:1, 3-9 and Marc. II. 10:6, 3-9 hark back to the Fall. Having been struck down by the Devil, the martyr must in turn strike him down.<sup>129</sup> Having (in the person of Adam) been overcome by Satan in the garden of Eden, the descendant of Adam must now overcome his foe in the arena.<sup>130</sup> Martyrdom is the re-enactment and the reversal of mankind's primeval apostasy; it is the Recapitulation of the Fall. To quote Marc. II. 10:6, 3-9:

"Certamini enim dedit spatium, ut et homo eadem arbitrii libertate elideret inimicum, qua succiderat illi, probans suam, non dei culpam, et ita salutem digne per uictoriam recuperaret, et diabolus amarius puniretur ab eo, quem eliserat ante, deuictus, et deus tanto magis bonus inueniretur, sustinens hominem gloriosiore in paradisu ad licentiam decerpendae arboris uitae iam de uita regressurum."

Scorp. 5:12, 22-27 confirms this interpretation of the martyr's sufferings. There, the ensnaring words of the Devil are replaced by the wholesome words of Christ; by paying heed to the latter, the martyr annuls the fatal consequences of listening to the former. In Tertullian's own words:

"Sed dominus sustentat a feruura delicti, donec tempore medicina temperaretur, paulatim remedia composuit, omnes fidei disciplinas et ipsas aemulas uitio, uerbum mortis uerbo uitae rescindentes, auditum transgressionis auditu deuotionis limantes. Ita, et cum mori praecipit medicus ille, ueternum mortis excludit."

The brainchild of Irenaeus, Recapitulation is the theory of the Atonement whereby the "second Adam" (passing through all the stages of human life) undoes by His absolute obedience the consequences of the first Adam's disobedience. Just as all men are summed up in the person of the 'old' Adam, all men are summed up in the Person of the New Adam.

Characterising Irenaeus' theory of Recapitulation, J.N.D. Kelly observes:

"Christ is indeed in his eyes, the 'second Adam' (ὁ δεύτερος Ἀδὰμ), and 'recapitulated' or reproduced the first even in the manner of His birth, being generated from the Blessed Virgin as he was from the virgin earth. Further, just as Adam contained in himself all his descendants so Christ (as the Lucan genealogy proves) 'recapitulated in Himself all the dispersed peoples dating back to Adam, all tongues and the whole race of mankind, along with Adam himself.' Thus, when He became incarnate, Christ 'recapitulated in Himself the long sequence of mankind', and passed through all the stages of human life, sanctifying each in turn. As a result (and this is Irenaeus' main point), just as Adam was the originator of a race disobedient and condemned to death, so Christ can be regarded as inaugurating a new, redeemed humanity."<sup>131</sup>

Tertullian's familiarity with the Irenaeian doctrine of Recapitulation can be demonstrated by Carn. 17:4, 29-17:6, 46, where he vividly draws parallels between the lives of two virgins - Eve and Mary. The former believed the words of the Serpent (the words of death); the latter believed those of Gabriel (the words of life). The former conceived a "fratricidal devil" in the person of Cain; the latter conceived the Saviour of the world - Christ Jesus.

Since as a traducianist Tertullian believed that the souls of all men are derived seminally from Adam,<sup>132</sup> it was easy



for him to apply the Recapitulation motif to martyrdom. The juxtaposition of Adam and the martyr, in his thought, is not simply a rhetorical device; the martyr is Adam, tempted anew in the "garden" of the arena.

By introducing the Recapitulation theme into his expositions of martyrdom, Tertullian highlights the fact that absolute obedience to God is an indispensable prerequisite for the successful accomplishment of martyrdom. Within the Irenaean theory, it is the obedience of Jesus which distinguished his life from that of Adam - in the words of Ad. Haer. III. 18:7, 197-202 -

"quemadmodum enim per inobaudientiam unius hominis qui primus de terra rudis plasmatus est peccatores facti sunt multi et amiserunt uitam, ita oportuit et per obaudientiam unius hominis qui primus ex uirgine natus est iustificari multos et percipere salutem."

Scorp. 6:1, 6-9 entreates the martyr to display faith ("fides") and strength ("uirtus")<sup>133</sup>. Marc. II. 10:6, 3-7 urge him to exercise free will - the very free will by which man had fallen ("eadem arbitrii libertate").<sup>134</sup> Scorp. 5:12, 22-27 counsels him to offer Jesus "allegiance" ("deuotio").<sup>135</sup> Thus, the Recapitulation motif reminds the Christian that the martyr's most effective weapon against the Devil is his loyalty to God and his obedience to His commands; indeed, martyrdom is obedience.

Furthermore, martyrdom as an act of Recapitulation pressed home the fact that the martyr's ultimate opponent is the Devil himself.<sup>136</sup> By so doing, it increased the solemnity and the fearsomeness of martyrdom.



Finally, by inflaming the martyr's hostility towards his opponent (the miseries which disfigure earthly life being the direct result of the Fall)<sup>137</sup> it transformed the martyr's death into an act of revenge - revenge upon the diabolic Serpent.

#### 4.1.6 The martyr renounces the "world"

In the post-Constantinian period, monasticism came to be regarded as a substitute for martyrdom.<sup>138</sup> Therefore, since the renunciation of the world lies at the heart of monasticism, the question has to be - did the theme of renouncing the world find a place in Tertullian's theory of martyrdom?

In his expositions of martyrdom, Tertullian does not explicitly call on Christians to "renounce" the "world". Nonetheless, there are vestiges of the idea. When discussing the martyr's confinement in prison, in Mart. 2:1, 31-2:1, 4 and 2:5, 15-18, he declares that the prospective martyr should not be alarmed by this "separation" from the world. As a Christian, he has "renounced" the world already - long before he darkened the portals of the prison. In the words of Mart. 2:1, 31-2:1, 4 and 2:5, 15-18:

"Exinde segregati estis ab ipso mundo, quanto magis a saeculo rebusque eius? Nec hoc uos consternet, quod segregati estis a mundo. Si enim recogitemus ipsum magis mundum carcerem esse, exisse uos e carcere, quam in carcerem introisse, intellegemus ... Contristetur illic qui fructum saeculi suspirat. Christianus etiam extra carcerem saeculo renuntiauit, in carcere autem

etiam carceri. Nihil interest, ubi sitis in saeculo, qui extra saeculum estis."

The key words are "segregare" and "renuntiare".

If, as Tertullian believed, the Christian's renunciation of the world at baptism<sup>139</sup> is consummated by his imprisonment for the sake of the Faith, how much more must his death for the Faith be the consummation of that baptismal renunciation. This view is confirmed by Spect. 29:2, 6-9, where he equated contempt of the world with fearlessness in the face of death:

"Quae maior uoluptas quam fastidium ipsius uoluptatis, quam saeculi totius contemptus, quam uera libertas, quam conscientia integra, quam uita sufficiens, quam mortis timor nullus?"

The significance of Spect. 29:2, 6-9 for martyrdom is that Tertullian often applied the word "saeculum" in a pejorative sense. Corrupted by the Devil,<sup>140</sup> the world is thoroughly permeated with idolatry - its God-given gifts abused by men.<sup>141</sup> It is in such a pejorative sense that Mart. 2:5, 16 and 2:5, 18 used the word. This is confirmed by Mart. 2:7, 22-31 where the "world" is characterised as a place of idolatry, immorality and barbarity.<sup>142</sup>

Within such a pattern of thought, contempt for or renunciation of the "world" could easily become a synonym for rejecting the Devil - the Devil in his role as "corrupter" ("interpolator")<sup>143</sup> However, although it is highly likely that Tertullian did regard martyrdom as the culmination of the Christian's attempts to "renounce" the word, he did not state so explicitly. Moreover, whilst he

undoubtedly did regard the Devil as the world's "corruptor", he confined his references to that theme to his general morality. They do not appear in his martyr theology. (This is in marked contrast to Mart. Prot. 3:275, 19-3:276, 2, where Origen exploited the idea of the martyr "renouncing" the world to the full).

Had Tertullian turned the "renunciation" motif fully to account, he could have transformed the martyr's death into an escape from the shackles of the world - an accession to freedom. The closest which he came to this was in Anim. 53:6, 50-55, where he described ordinary death as a "release" from the bondage of the flesh" - a "passage" from "shadows" to "reality". His martyr theology was the poorer for his failure.

#### 4.1.7 Who are the martyrs' opponents?

In the course of his theology of martyrdom, Tertullian casts the part of the martyrs' enemy in three distinct ways. In Scorp. 4:5, 14-18 and Apol. 50:2, 7-11, their enemies are ostensibly the pagans. In Ieiun. 17:8, 20-25 and Fug. 1:5, 37-40, they are explicitly the evil spirits. In Scorp. 6:1, 3-9, Marc. II. 10:6, 3-9 and Fug. 10:2, 4-8, the martyrs' enemy is just as emphatically the Devil.

The precise identity of the martyrs' foes is complicated still further by the recognition that though the demons undoubtedly constituted a crucial component within the evil spirits (Apol. 23:19, 93-97 notes that it is to the demons

that the pagan persecutors sacrificed Christian blood) Tertullian also numbered the fallen angels in their ranks. Waszink is correct when he observes that within Tertullianic demonology, the distinction between demons and fallen angels is often blurred.<sup>144</sup>

I. Enoch 10:11-13 and 18:9-16 maintain that the Watchers (that is, the fallen angels) have been "bound" by the Almighty until the day of judgement - leaving only the demons (the offspring of the giants) to rove the earth, tempting and tormenting mankind. I Enoch 10:12 situates the fallen angels' prison beneath the hills; I Enoch 18:11-14 sites it within a great chasm. I Enoch 10:4-6 even claims that God has "bound" Azazel, the leader of the Watchers, under "jagged and sharp stones" in the "desert".

Nevertheless, in spite of Tertullian's fondness for adducing I Enoch's account of the fall of the Watchers, their interim chastisement does not find a place in his demonology. This can be demonstrated by Cult. I. 2:4, 36-39, where he reminded the faithful that the Watchers are the very angels whom they had renounced in the font:

"Hi sunt nempe angeli, quos iudicaturi sumus, hi sunt angeli, quibus in lauacro renuntiamus, haec sunt utique, per quae ab homine iudicari meruerunt."

The fact that he also included the demons under the condemnation when he stated, in Apol. 22:3, 10-13, that the Watchers have been "condemned" ("damnare") indicates that that condemnation does not refer to the interim condemnation described by I Enoch. Thus, the evil spirits facing the

martyrs include both demons and fallen angels amongst their number.

Despite appearances to the contrary, there is not really a contradiction between asserting that the martyrs enemies are his pagan persecutors and asserting that they are spiritual beings. Apol. 23:19, 93-97 and 27:4, 13-18 are adamant that the Christians' human persecutors are merely the "pawns" of his spiritual foes:

"Colitis illos, quod sciam etiam de sanguine Christianorum. Nollent ubique uos tam fructuosos, tam officiosos sibi amittere, uel ne a uobis quandoque Christianis fugentur, si illis sub Christiano, uolente uobis ueritatem probare, mentiri liceret."  
(Apol. 23:19, 93-97).

It is also significant that Tertullian confined his allusions to the martyrs' human opponents to his expositions of martyrdom as warfare.<sup>145</sup> In the secular sphere, the main battle can be preceded by preliminary skirmishes. When transposed to the religious sphere, this means that martyrdom as the ultimate battle leaves a role, albeit a subordinate open, for the martyrs' human foes. The metaphor of the athletic contest, by contrast, cannot readily incorporate the idea of a subsidiary contest and subordinate opponents.<sup>146</sup>

As for the apparent contradiction between martyrdom and conflict with the Devil and martyrdom as conflict with evil spirits, it is removed by the fact that, in Tertullian's eyes, Satan is not simply the "father of sinners";<sup>147</sup> he is also the "prince of the powers of the air".<sup>148</sup>

Subordinating the evil spirits to the authority of Satan, Marc. V. 18:12, 4-8 is characteristic of his approach:

"Porro, cum supra quidem induere nos iubeat armaturam, in qua stemus ad machinationes diaboli, iam ostendit diaboli esse quae diabolo subiungit, potestates et munditenentes tenebrarum istarum, quae et nos diabolo deputamus."

Just as human rulers employ emissaries to carry out their will, so Satan employs evil spirits to execute his wishes.

The hierarchical structure of the forces of evil would have been confirmed for Tertullian by the nature of the baptismal renunciation which Christians make. They do not abjure Satan and the angels; they forswear Satan and his angels.<sup>149</sup>

Well might F.X. Gokey observe that "there is a hierarchy of evil spirits under Satan resembling human political institutions".<sup>150</sup>

4.1.8      What do the salient features of Tertullian's demonology contribute to his understanding of martyrdom?

Under the heading "demonology", I shall include both demonology in the strictest sense of the theory of demons and demonology in the wider sense of the theory of the Devil. Because the Devil shares many of the demons' characteristics (notably, their spiritual nature) I will deal with Tertullian's concept of demons and the contribution of that theory to his understanding of martyrdom first.



Apol. 22:5, 18-20 concludes that being spirit, demons' bodies are of such a fine substance that they can assail both the flesh and the soul of their human victims -

"suppetit illis ad utramque substantiam hominis adeundam mira subtilitas et tenuitas sua."

Moreover, Apol. 22:6, 25-28 concludes that their breath is so contagious that even one whiff has the power to pollute their victims' souls -

"eadem igitur obscuritate contagionis adspiratio daemonum et angelorum mentis quoque corruptelas agit furoribus et amentis foedis aut saevis libidinibus et erroribus variis."

J. Daniélou interprets the former passage in terms of demons actually entering their victims' souls:

"Demons, Tertullian says, cause physical illness and 'sudden extravagant bursts of violence' in the soul. They are able to enter both the body and the soul because of 'their subtle and impalpable substance'."151

This interpretation based largely upon the word "fineness" ("tenuitas") may be correct. However, the verb used by Tertullian to describe the demons actions, the verb "adire", must mean that that interpretation, though probable, is not absolutely certain; "to assail" something and "to enter" it are not necessarily the same thing.

What is certain is that because of Tertullian's adherence to the corporeality of all being, the breath of a demon is a concrete entity and whilst a miasma must not be confused with a personal entity, this means that something does enter a man's soul when a demon's breath pollutes him. Moreover,

since "breath" is intimately bound up with "spirit" in Tertullianic anthropology,<sup>152</sup> a demon's breath is inextricably linked with the person of that demon. Thus, even if the demons remain outwith the souls of those whom they seek to corrupt, they instil their own impurity therein.

Contagious breath was not, however, the only danger which the demons and the fallen angels posed to the Christian. His spiritual foes were also swift in movement and invisible. Apol. 22:8, 34-36 teaches that evil spirits can traverse the world in a single moment:

"Omnis spiritus ales est: hoc et angeli et daemones. Igitur momento ubique sunt. Totus orbis illis locus unus est; quid ubi geratur tam facile sciunt quam annuntiant."

Apol. 22:5, 20-22 insists that the meddling of demons can only be perceived in the outcome (the entities themselves being intangible) -

"multum spiritalibus uiribus licet, ut inuisibiles et insensibiles in effectu potius quam in actu suo appareant."

Since his birth, each human being has had a demon in close attendance upon him.<sup>153</sup> Therefore, since such a demon has an intimate knowledge of the individual's frailties, the demons are formidable opponents. The application of the serpent motif to the evil spirits, in Marc. IV. 24:10, 17-21 and Idol. 5:4, 9-13, is highly apposite - not merely are they the minions of the supreme Serpent, they are tempters of extreme subtlety.

If the martyr's resolution can be weakened even through contact with the breath of his demoniac opponents, he will undoubtedly have to be constantly on his guard lest he inadvertently weakens. If his foes are invisible and swift or movement, the martyr will have to beware lest the suddenness of their onslaught take him unawares. Moreover, opponents who can transport themselves anywhere in the world in a single moment could torture the martyr and undermine his resolve by bringing home to him the anguish of his loved ones. As Waltzing observes, the demons "sont ailés et se déplacent instantanément: ils peuvent donc annoncer des faits qui se passent au loin".<sup>154</sup>

Thus, Tertullian's demonology underlined the fact that martyrdom is an extremely dangerous death; as long as the martyr retains breath in his body, the evil spirits will employ all their powers in a bid to force him to apostatise. It also highlights the fact that the martyr's death is an extremely frightening death; a danger which cannot be seen is often more frightening than a danger which can be assessed. Finally, it reminded the faithful of the insidious danger which lies submerged within the martyr's pain. It was not without reason that Tertullian urged them to bolster their quaking flesh by recollecting the rewards promised to the martyrs; in an attempt to make them quail, the powers of evil will instil doubts regarding the purpose of their sufferings.

If martyrdom was an extremely dangerous death because it was a conflict against exceptionally powerful opponents, it was

also a death which preserves the moral purity of the martyr and strikes a blow against lasciviousness and all other forms of moral corruption. In keeping with the wording of the Vetus Latina, Tertullian categorised the martyr's opponents by such words as "malitia" and "nequitia". While they both indicate that the spirits are worthless, the word "malitia" also implies that they are spiteful and malicious, the word "nequitia" that they are profligate, wanton and lewd.

The offspring of the Watcher's intercourse with women,<sup>155</sup> the demons encourage men to be lewd and wanton;<sup>156</sup> the Watchers do not merely encourage men to display those characteristics, they display them themselves.<sup>157</sup> Thus, according to Cult. I. 2:3, 28-2:4, 32, it was their savage lust which had encompassed their fall:

"Nihil plus desiderare poterant quae angelos possidebant: magno scilicet nupserant. Enimuero, qui utique interdum cogitabant, unde cecidissent, et post libidinum uaporata momenta caelum suspirabant, illi id ipsum bonum feminarium naturalis decoris, ut causam mali, sic remunerauerunt."

Tertullian went further. He envisaged the demons as ritually unclean. He expressed this symbolically by accusing them of causing crops to rot<sup>158</sup> and literally by stating that they subsist on a diet of smoke from fetid sacrificial victims.<sup>159</sup>

Since as Monog 15:2, 10-15:4, 24 and Pud. 22:11, 47-22:15, 72 recognised, apostasy is equated with uncleanness, martyrdom must be envisaged as a victory against moral and

ritual corruption. Moreover, given the value of martyrdom as an act of witness,<sup>160</sup> that death is not merely a victory over the martyr's own corrupt tendencies, it was a victory over the demoniacally inspired corrupt tendencies of his fellow men. Thus, Tertullian's demonology reinforced both his concept of martyrdom as a "second baptism"<sup>161</sup> and that of martyrdom as a teaching medium. It must also have served to exacerbate the hostility and the disgust with which the martyrs viewed their spiritual opponents.

Then there is the fact that within Tertullianic demonology, it is the demons who are the true recipients of the worship which men accord to idols.<sup>162</sup> Transposed to martyr theology, this view was a timely reminder that the martyr's death is a rejection of and a blow against idolatry. By refusing to sacrifice to the gods, the martyr had rejected the demoniac idols. By dying in order to uphold that rejection, the martyr dealt a blow against their hold over men, by encouraging pagans to enquire into the teachings of the Faith.<sup>163</sup>

Powerful and corrupting, the spirits of the Evil One are also extremely numerous. Thronging the air,<sup>164</sup> they pervade the martyr's world. Whereas a theory of conflict which is directed towards the Devil renders evil more personal and therefore more tangible, a theory which is directed towards evil spirits reminds the faithful that the martyr is faced by enemies beyond number. Thus, it underlines the fact that martyrdom is an extremely dangerous death.

Finally, according to Tertullianic demonology, the evil spirits are the Christians' "slaves".<sup>165</sup> Indeed, Marc. II. 8:2, 7-13 and 8:3, 17-20 (where Tertullian states that Satan's ontological status is inferior to that of man) indicates that the demons ontological status is lower than that of the martyrs:

"Nam etsi angelus qui seduxit, sed liber et suae potestatis qui seductus est, sed imago et similitudo dei fortior angelo, sed adflatus dei generosior spiritu materiali, quo angeli constiterunt, - qui facit, inquit, spiritus angelos et apparitores flammam ignis - quia nec uniuersitatem homini subiecisset infirmo dominandi et non potiori angelis, quibus nihil tale subiecit ... Atque adeo eundem hominem, eandem substantiam animae, eundem Adae statum eadem arbitrii libertas et potestas uictorem efficit hodie de eodem diabolo, cum secundum obsequium legum dei administratur."

Applied to martyr theology, the subordination of the evil spirits to the faithful has two consequences. Firstly, because Apol. 27:7, 27-30 equates the demons with slaves doing hard labour in the mines ("itaque, dum uice repugnantium uel rebellantium ergastulorum siue carcerum uel metallorum uel hoc genus poenalis seruitutis erumpunt aduersus nos proeliaturi, in quorum potestate sunt, certi et impares se esse et hoc magis perditos") the martyr's death will be distinguished by its brutality. The slaves who toiled within the mines were notorious for the extent to which their working conditions had brutalised them and caused their insurrections to be peculiarly vicious.<sup>166</sup>

Secondly, despite the intense danger posed to the prospective martyr by the evil spirits' extraordinary powers, martyrdom is a battle between ontological unequal



adversaries<sup>167</sup> and therefore is a battle which the human combatant has no excuse to lose. It is surely significant that Marc. II. 8:2, 7-8:3, 20 is to be found in close proximity to Marc. II. 10:6, 3-9, where Tertullian referred to the martyr overcoming the Devil by "that same freedom of choice" as that by which Adam was overthrown. Although some of the paradox which this aspect of his demonology introduces into his theology of martyrdom can be removed by the recognition that the human will is so vitiated<sup>168</sup> that the assistance of the Holy Spirit is necessary if the martyr is to be victorious<sup>169</sup> (God is ontologically superior to angels,<sup>170</sup> be they good or evil) it illustrates that Tertullian's vision of martyrdom was not always consistent. A dangerous death, there is also a sense in which it ought to be an "easy" death.

Having determined the contribution of Tertullian's concept of evil spirits to his theory of martyrdom, I will now seek to demonstrate that of his concept of the Devil. Puffed up with pride and conceit, the Devil considers himself God's equal.<sup>171</sup> Such a proud being felt the degradation keenly when the Almighty placed man (a being composed of flesh and soul) over His earthly creation.<sup>172</sup> So jealous is he of men that he even envies the scars of the confessor who fails to endure unto death.<sup>173</sup> Jealousy is a prime motive for hate.

That the Devil does hate men bitterly comes across clearly in Paen. 7:7, 23-7:8, 29. There, Tertullian visualises Satan literally seething with rage; so furious is he that

he practically gnashes his teeth in his frustration. In Tertullian's own words:

"Sed enim peruicacissimus hostis ille numquam malitiae suae otium facit, atquin tunc maxime saeuit cum hominem plene sentit liberatum, tunc plurimum accenditur cum extinguitur. Doleat et ingemiscat necesse est uenia peccatorum permissa tot in homine mortis opera diruta, tot titulos dominationis retro suae erasos. Dolet quod ipsum et angelos eius Christo seruus ille peccator iudicaturus est."

Such is Satan's hatred that the idea of being judged by men fills him with ever greater loathing; the idea of men being condemned for their sins, by contrast, fills him with ever greater delight.

This emphasis upon the Devil's hatred for mankind highlights the fact that that hatred plays a vital role in encompassing the martyr's death. It also serves as a salutary reminder that martyrdom is a contest against a highly motivated opponent; if the prospective martyr is to reach his goal successfully, he will have to be totally motivated too.

Whilst it is true that Pat. 5:5, 16-5:7, 26 (the other passage in which Tertullian offers a detailed psychological profile of the Devil) stands outside his martyr theology, Paen. 7:9, 29-34 with its inclusion of "the fear of earthly powers" amongst the foremost temptations of Satan demonstrates that he was well aware of the part which his hatred and jealousy play in the martyr's death. I quote:

"Itaque obseruat obpugnat obsidet, si qua possit aut oculos concupiscentia carnali ferire aut animum inlecebris saecularibus inretire aut fidem terrenae potestatis formidine euertere aut a uia certa peruersis traditionibus detorquere; non scandalis, non temptationibus deficit."

Following hard upon Paen. 7:7, 23-7:8, 29 as it does, this excerpt confirms that the former passage is integral to a proper understanding of Tertullian's understanding of martyrdom. The importance of the Devil's hatred and jealousy within that understanding is also illustrated by Fug. 2:1, 1-2:2, 25.

Proud, jealous and angry, the Devil is also wily. When describing the martyr's contest with the Devil, Scorp. 6:1, 4-6 and Marc. II. 10:6, 6-7 allude to Gen. 3:15 - the text which records God's prophetic condemnation of the Serpent. As a result of the Devil's assumption of the form of a serpent at the Fall,<sup>174</sup> Tertullian considered that serpents are synonymous with subtlety and cunning. Ual. 2:3, 3-10 declares:

"Repuerescere nos et apostolus iubens secundum dominum, ut malitia infantes per simplicitatem ita demum sapientes sensibus simus, semel dedit sapientiae ordinem de simplicitate manandi. In summa: columba demonstrare Christum solita est, serpens uero temptare; illa est a primordio diuinae pacis praeco, ille a primordio diuinae imaginis praedo. Ita facilius simplicitas sola deum et agnoscere poterit et ostendere prudentia sola. Concutere potius et prodere."

Therefore, by alluding to Gen. 3:15, Scorp. 6:1, 4-6 and Marc. II. 10:6, 6-7 emphasised that the martyr's opponent is extremely cunning. The effect upon Tertullian's theology of death was to underline the fact that martyrdom is perilous and that the prospective martyr's crown is not certain until he has drawn his last breath. (The fact that the Devil is also a "liar"<sup>175</sup> would only have exacerbated the dangerous nature of the martyr's death).

If the Devil's cunning means that martyrdom is a dangerous death (in which the martyr must be careful not to underestimate the threat posed by his opponent) Tertullian's portrait of the Devil also vividly illustrates that it is a nauseating, even repulsive death. By making great play of the fact that the martyr is snatched from the Devil's "throat" ("gula"), Scorp. 6:1, 6-9 does not merely remind the faithful that the martyr's opponent has a voracious, indeed an insatiable appetite for his blood; it also renders him repulsive. The metaphor of man lodged in the Devil's gullet has carnivorous, even bestial overtones; it is only a short step away from depicting Satan as a beast or a dragon. I quote:

"Euulsum enim hominem de diaboli gula per fidem  
iam et per uirtutem inculcatorem eius uoluit  
efficere, ne solummodo euasisset, uerum etiam  
euicisset inimicum"  
(Scorp. 6:1, 6-9).

Although it was the apostasy of Adam and Eve which had been the cause of man being "swallowed" (not the death of the martyr) Tertullian by emphasising that the martyr's life is sought by a being who has a "carnivorous appetite of voracious proportions, evoked the bloodwrung, barbaric dimension of the martyr's death. Such a repulsive being will not release his prey easily; like the beast which by implication he is, Satan will maul the flesh of his prey terribly.

A proper understanding of the Tertullianic Satan and his role in the martyr's death requires, however, a recognition

of the extent to which he was a Jobean Satan. Firstly, like his Jobean predecessor, the Tertullianic Satan is a tempter. Thus, in a bid to define his role, Fug. 2:5, 41-51 cites Mt. 6:13:

Et utique cum filius dei protectionem fidei habet in sua potestate, quam a patre postulat, a quo omnem accepit potestatem in caelis et in terris, quale est ut concussionem fidei diabolus in manu sua habeat? Sed in legitima oratione, cum dicimus ad patrem: 'ne nos inducas in temptationem' - quae autem maior temptatio, quam persecutio; - ab eo illam profiteamur accidere a quo ueniam eius deprecamur. Hoc est enim quod sequitur: 'sed erue nos a maligno', id est: ne nos induxeris in temptationem permittendo nos maligno. Tunc enim eruiamur diaboli manibus, cum illi non tradimur in temptationem."

Secondly, like his Jobean predecessor,<sup>176</sup> the Tertullianic Satan can exercise his role as the tempter of mankind only with the explicit permission of God; he is God's subordinate. To quote Fug. 2:6, 52-54 -

"nec in porcorum gregem diaboli legio habuit potestatem, nisi eam de deo impetrasset: tanto potestatem abest, ut in oues dei habeat."

That Tertullian consciously modelled his vision of Satan upon that depicted in Jb. 1:6-12 and 2:1-6 can be demonstrated by Fug. 2:3, 26-32 where he deliberately chose the example of Job when seeking to prove that the Devil is not merely a tempter but also an instrument of God. He states:

"Habes exemplum Iob, cui diabolus nullam potuit incutere temptationem, nisi a deo accepisset potestatem, nec in substantiam quidem eius, nisi dominus 'ecce', dixisset, 'omnia, quae sunt ei, in manu tua do, in ipsum autem ne extenderis manum.' Denique nec extendit, nisi posteaquam et hoc

postulanti dominus 'ecce', dixisset, 'trado tibi illum, tantum animam eius custodi'."

There are, admittedly, divergences between the Tertullianic Devil and the Jobean Satan. Having been cast down from the very height of Heaven,<sup>177</sup> the former is no longer a member of the "bene-elohim".<sup>178</sup> Moreover, the covert hostility of the latter<sup>179</sup> has been transformed into open hostility.<sup>180</sup> However, in the subordinate role of the Tertullianic Devil, there are traces of the cynical "mal'ak Yahweh"; there are vestiges of the notion that evil is "the dark side of the divine nature."<sup>181</sup>

Applied to Tertullian's theology of martyrdom, his Jobean concept of Satan reinforced the view that the martyr's death is quintessentially a successful resistance to temptation. This is confirmed by Fug. 2:2, 18-25, where the Devil's temptation of the martyrs leads to the vindication of the elect:

"Igitur quod ministerium non est arbitrii, sed seruitii - arbitrium enim domini persecutio propter fidei probationem, ministerium autem iniquitas diaboli propter persecutionis instructionem -, ita eam per diabolum, si forte, non a diabolo euenire credimus. Nihil satanae in seruos dei uiui licebit, nisi permiserit dominus, ut aut ipsum destruat per fidem electorum in temptatione uictricem, aut homines eius fuisse traducat, qui defecerint ad illum."

It also means that martyrdom is undoubtedly in accordance with the will of the Almighty. As is clearly stated in Fug. 2:1, 6-12, although the Devil's cruelty and injustice have a vital role to play in the persection of the faithful, they are merely tools in the hands of God:



"Quatenus nec persecutio potest sine iniquitate diaboli nec probatio fidei sine persecutione, propter probationem fidei necessariam iniquitatem non patrociniū praestare persecutioni, sed ministerium; praecedere enim dei uoluntatem circa fidei probationem, quae est ratio persecutionis, sequi autem diaboli iniquitatem ad instrumentum persecutionis, quae ratio est probationis."

The one important strand of Tertullian's diabolology which he did not exploit in his theory of martyrdom was that of Satan as the "corrupter" of the world - the theme which is to the fore in such extracts as Test. 3:2, 7-13, Spect. 2:12, 59-69 and 27:4, 14-27:5, 21. Given the potential of that these for highlighting that martyrdom is a welcome escape from the trammels of this life, this omission is surprising.

The implications of Tertullian's demonology for his theology of martyrdom may not always have been consistent but they point out the complexity of that theory, thereby adding interest to its study.

#### 4.1.9 The contribution of the Bible to Tertullian's theory

The major contribution made by Eph. 6:10-17 has already been indicated. However, they were not the only verses which moulded Tertullian's theory of martyrdom as conflict with the powers of evil.

From texts such as I Cor. 4:9, 9:24, I Tim. 6:12 and 2 Tim. 4:7-8, he drew his authority for depicting martyrdom as an athletic contest<sup>182</sup>:

"For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men."  
(I Cor. 4:9).

From texts such as Mt. 10:34, I Cor. 10:3-4 and 2 Tim. 2:3-4, he drew additional authority for martyrdom as a battle:<sup>183</sup>

"Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him."  
(2 Tim. 2:3-4).

As for texts such as I Cor. 9:25, I Tim. 6:12, 2 Tim 4:8, Jm. 1:12, Rev. 2:10 and 4:4, they provided him with Biblical sanction for the martyrs' eternal rewards.<sup>184</sup> Indeed, without them, Tertullian's argument would have lost much of its persuasive force.

If these Biblical verses are in the forefront of his theory of martyrdom as conflict, other verses play an important role in establishing the requisite intellectual framework for such a conflict. 2 Cor. 6:14-16, I Thess. 5:4-5, I Jn. 2:8-11 and 3:6-10<sup>185</sup> - these verses reinforced his belief that an absolute dichotomy prevails between good and evil, God and the Devil. Similarly, in such verses as Gen. 3:1-5, Jb. 1:6-12, 2:1-6, Mt. 13:24-30, Jn. 8:44 and I Pet. 5:8<sup>186</sup> Tertullian found delineated the salient features of the martyr's chief adversary - Satan himself. Moreover, since I Cor. 10:19-21<sup>187</sup> which sets the demons over against the goodness and purity of the Almighty finds a place in his works, he even had Biblical authority for depicting the

demons as "unclean" spirits. (Such a recognition does not prejudice the fact that his view of demons was governed primarily by the Jewish apocalyptic tradition).<sup>188</sup>

Finally, given that Tertullian believed that the baptismal oath is the wellspring for martyrdom as conflict with the powers of evil, the key position which he accorded to Gal. 3:27, in Fug. 10:2, 16-18 was well-advised:

"Christum indutus es, siquidem in Christum tinctus es, qui fugis diabolum. Depretiasti Christum, qui in te est; fugitium cum diabolo te reddidisti."

As for Rom. 6:1-11 and Col. 2:12, although he quoted them only in his general morality,<sup>189</sup> they probably formed part of the background for his theory of martyrdom.

However, important though the foregoing Biblical data was for Tertullian, there are Biblical verses which he did not successfully integrate in his theology martyrdom. A fine example is I Pet. 5:8, where the Devil is described as a "roaring lion" who seeks his prey in order to "devour" it. Despite its memorable representation of the bloodthirsty character of Satan, the only occasion on which Tertullian alluded to this verse was when he was exhorting virgins to wear veils, not martyrs to die for Jesus. What is more, even Uirg. 3:2, 7-10 employed I Pet. 5:8 in a somewhat cursory manner:

"Sed quoniam coeperat agnitio proficere, ut per licentiam utriusque moris indicium melioris partis emergeret, statim ille aduersarius bonorum multoque institutorum opus suum fecit."

Even where the Biblical data is successfully integrated (as is normally the case) the exigencies of his immediate argument sometimes caused him to adapt their meaning subtly. Thus, in its exegesis of Rom 8:35-39, Scorp. 13:4, 5-14 has set aside the idea that the elect are predestined to enjoy the love of God<sup>190</sup> and the impetus of Tertullian's argument has become that the powers which oppose the martyr are weaker than those which urge him on. I quote:

"Et ideo postmodum, 'quis', inquit, 'separabit nos a dilectione Christi? Pressura an angustia an famis an nuditas an periculum an machaera? Secundum quod scriptum est: tua causa mortificamur tota die; deputati sumus ut pecora iugulationis, sed in omnibus istis superuincimus pro eo qui nos dilexit. Persuasum enim habemus, quod neque mors neque uita neque uirtus neque sublimitas neque profundum neque alia condicio poterit nos a dilectione dei separare, quae est in Christo Iesu domino nostro'."

Three conclusions may be drawn from the manner in which Tertullian exploited the available Biblical teaching, Firstly, despite the impact of secular analogies in his exegesis of the Biblically inspired athletic and military metaphors, the Tertullianic version of martyrdom as conflict with the powers of evil was essentially a Biblical concept.

Secondly, whilst it is true that his choice of Biblical verses with which to illuminate this theme was governed, to a large extent, by the distribution of the motifs of "contest" and "combat" within the Bible itself (the Pauline Epistles according more prominence to them than the Gospels did) the conflict-orientated dimension of Tertullian's martyr theology was essentially a Pauline concept. By far the greater number of his Biblical citations appear in works

which he ascribed to Paul.<sup>191</sup> However, though the weight of the Biblical evidence was Pauline, it is important to remember<sup>192</sup> Gen. 3:15; it had an influence which far exceeded the number of its citations.

Finally, given that his choice of Biblical verses were, by and large, confined to those which had obvious relevance to the matter in hand, Tertullian's concept was a practical one - not an imaginative one; a conclusion which is not obviated by the vividly pictorial character of Scorp. 6:1, 3-9. This is in marked contrast to Origen, who calmly applied the words addressed to Lucifer in Isa. 14:9-12 to those who fail to meet the challenge thrown down by martyrdom. Mart. Prot. 18:286, 16-28 declares:

„πάντες ἀποκριθήσονται καὶ ἐροῦσί σοι“. τίνα δὲ ἐροῦσιν αἱ νενικημένοι δυνάμεις τοῖς νενικημένοις καὶ οἱ ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐαλωκότες τοῖς ἐν ἀρνήσει ἐαλωκόσι, τίνα οὗ ταῦτα; „καὶ σὺ ἐάλως ὥσπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἐν ἡμῖν δὲ κατελογίσθη“. ἔὰν δὲ καὶ μεγάλης τις ἐλπίδος τυγχάνων καὶ ἐνδόξου τῆς ἐν θεῷ ὑπὸ δειλίας ἢ πόνων προσαγομένων ἡττηθῇ ἐν θεῷ, ἀκούσεται\* „κατέβη εἰς ὅδου ἢ δόξα σου, ἢ πολλὴ εὐφροσύνη σου\* ὑποκάτω σου στρώσουσι σῆψιν, καὶ τὸ κατακάλυμμά σου σκώληξ.“ εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔλαμψέ τις ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πολλάκις ὡς „ὁ ἑωσφόρος“ ἐπιφαινόμενος αὐταῖς λαμψάντων αὐτοῦ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων „ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων“ καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τὸν μέγαν ἀγῶνα ἀγωνιζόμενος τὸν στέφανον ἀπολώλεκε τοιοῦτου θρόνου, ἀκούσεται\* „πῶς ἐξέπεσεν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὁ ἑωσφόρος ὁ πρῶτὸς ἀνατέλλων, συνετρίβη ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν.“

#### 4.2 Ordinary death : a conflict with the forces of evil?

Since the forces of evil play such a crucial role in the death of the martyr, had Tertullian gone on to conclude that they have a function in ordinary death too, he would not

have been unreasonable. The evidence for his having come to such a conclusion is ambiguous.

He conceded that evil spirits are responsible for inflicting diseases upon mankind. In the words of Apol. 22:4, 15-17 and 22:11, 50-53:

"Malitia spiritalis a primordio auspicata est in hominis exitium. Itaque corporibus quidem et uoletudines"  
(Apol. 22:4, 15-17)

and

"Laedunt (the demons) enim primo, dehinc remedia praecipunt ad miraculum noua siue contraria; post, quae desinunt laedere et curasse creduntur."  
(Apol. 22:11, 50-53).

Therefore, although the Almighty alone possesses the power of life and death<sup>193</sup> in the eyes of Tertullian, the forces of evil probably have a hand in producing, or at very least exacerbating, the symptoms endured by the dying.

With respect to the dying man's spiritual suffering, he was more reticent. As his character is portrayed in Paen. 7:7, 23-7:9, 34, it is hard to believe that the Tertullianic Satan ceases to torment Christians as long as there is life left in their bodies; if he does so, he will indeed call a "halt" to his "spite" against mankind. Instilling doubts, in the mind of the dying man, regarding the goodness of the God who inflicts his pain and the reality of life after death would be in character.



Furthermore, since the Tertullianic Satan will be "council for the prosecution" at the final judgement,<sup>194</sup> it would be logical to visualise his reminding the dying Christian that he has committed many sins, in the hope that the resultant despair will break his faith. The Satanic prosecutor's role in the case of non-Christians would have been diametrically opposed; he would have kept their minds focussed on earthly things - far away from their sins and the Truth. Nevertheless, likely though it is that this is not an inaccurate description of Tertullian views, it is mere speculation. He did not leave a record of his views on this topic.

The interaction of the dying with the forces of evil should not be confused with the angel whom, Tertullian believed, the dying sometimes saw in the last moments of their lives - the visitation described in Anim. 53:6, 50-58. The angel who signals to the dying the eternal fate of their souls, is not one of the powers of evil but a divine messenger, one of the heavenly host.<sup>195</sup>

The ambiguities bedevilling ordinary death as a conflict with the powers of evil are exacerbated by the fact that whilst Tertullian never used the language of "contest" and "combat" with reference to ordinary death, he did apply such language to the Christian life. Thus, Spect. 29:5, 20-24 states:

Uis et pugilatus et luctatus? Praesto sunt, non parua sed multa. Aspice impudicitiam deiectam a castitate, perfidiam caesam a fide, saeuitiam a misericordia contusam, petulantiam a modestia

adumbratam, et tales sunt apud nos agones in quibus ipsi coronamur."

From this it may probably be concluded that Tertullian did regard ordinary death, particularly the ordinary death of the Christian, as a conflict with the forces of evil. However, this never emerged as a clear theory. Perhaps, as was the case with his failure to exploit the idea of the "good" death of the ordinary Christian, he was afraid of detracting from the Christian's duty to accept martyrdom.

Before concluding this chapter, there is one final question which must be asked - was Tertullian's attitude to death as the culmination of man's conflict with the powers of evil effected by his conversion to Montanism? If that question is understood in terms of whether or not he considered the fight with the Devil to be mandatory and flight illegitimate, the answer must be in the affirmative. As Pat. 13:6, 22-25 and Uxor. I. 3:4, 20-26 demonstrate, the Catholic Tertullian appears to have countenanced flight in the face of persecution. Contrasting such passages with his outright condemnation of flight, in Fug., Barnes observes:

"Tertullian's attitude to martyrdom changed with the passing years. That is a platitude; but one whose truth has rarely been accurately perceived."<sup>196</sup>

However, even this affirmative must have a rider appended to it. By contrasting that which is "permitted" with that which is "better", Uxor. I. 3:4, 20-26 implies that even the Catholic Tertullian had strong reservations about the faithful fleeing in the face of the Devil's onslaught.

If the question is understood in terms of his understanding of the fundamental nature of the martyr's conflict, the answer must be in the negative. Apol. 50:2, 7-11 and Scorp. 4:5, 14-18 (where martyrdom is depicted as a battle) and Scorp. 6:1, 3-9 and Mart. 3:3, 23-26 (where it is depicted as an athletic competition) prove that the Catholic Tertullian had as clear a vision of martyrdom as both "combat" and "contest" as that which can be found in such Montanist works as Fug. 10:2, 4-8 and Ieiun. 17:8, 20-25. Similarly, although Ieiun. 17:8, 23-25 (with its emphasis on the need for the martyr to display spiritual strength) might sound peculiarly Montanist - preceded as it was by an exhortation to practice xerophany - its fundamental message does not diverge from Mart. 4:1, 10-4:3, 23. Indeed, the vicious, even barbaric pictures of the martyr's contest given in Scorp. 6:1, 3-9 and 4:5, 14-18 have no parallel in his Montanist works.

The most which can probably be said is that Tertullian's conversion to Montanism encouraged him to take the implications of Eph. 6:10-17 for martyr theology more seriously than he might otherwise have done. The majority of his allusions to these verses appear in Fug., Cor. and Ieiun. - works which date from his Montanist period.

To sum up, the Christian's response to the temptations and the torments inflicted upon him by the Devil and his minions lies at the heart of Tertullian's understanding of martyrdom

and probably had a part of play in his understanding of ordinary death. Furthermore, of all the elements in his martyr theology, this was in all likelihood the one which struck the strongest chord with his contemporary readers - conforming closest to popular belief.<sup>197</sup>

The chapters which follow will demonstrate the extent to which Tertullian's reflections on death should also be viewed in the light of sacrificial theory and eschatology. These facets of his reflections on death, nevertheless, build upon his theory of demoniac and diabolic combat. Although it is true that the martyr's readiness to sacrifice himself is a sharp weapon in his conflict against Satan, it is his successful rejection of the temptations and the torments inflicted by the forces of evil which form an essential part of the sacrifice of love which he offers to his God. Similarly, the martyr's successful rejection of the blandishments offered by the forces of evil constitute a significant proportion of his personal merit in the eyes of God - the merit which earns the martyr his participation in the joys of eternity.

A soldier of the Almighty and an athlete of the Deity - the ethic imposed upon the Christian by Tertullian is a stern and a demanding one. When set against the context of both army life and athletics as they manifested themselves in the classical world, it is also a merciless ethic. None but the spiritually strong would have been able to meet its demands without quailing.

## References : Chapter 4

1. Rambaux, Tertullien Face aux Morales, Paris, 1979, pp.387 and 388.
2. Discussion Cor. 11:1, 1, 1-11:14, 36, Daniélou makes the following observations. "It is clear from an examination of this passage how easy it was to describe the Christian community in military terminology. Some words obviously have technical meaning both in the terminology of the Church and in that of the Roman army. Examples of this are 'sacramentum', 'signum' and 'statio'. The Roman 'statio', which refers to a military position consisting of a guard and soldiers, is matched by a Christian 'statio' or fast (De jejun. 10, 7) ... Some of the words are, of course, explicitly military - the standard or 'uexillum' denotes the cross of Christ (Ad nat. I. 12, 16)" (Origins, p.450).
3. The fact that Tertullian did indeed categorise the baptismal renunciation as "an oath" can be demonstrated by Cor. 11:1, 4-5, Idol. 19:2, 14-15 and Scorp. 4:5, 14-15. "Credimusne humanum sacramentum diuino superduci licere?" (Cor. 11:1, 4). The wording of that oath can be found in Idol. 6:1, 22-6:2, 26 and Spect. 4:1, 2-5.
4. "Non conuenit sacramento diuino et humano, signo Christi et signo diaboli, castris lucis et castris tenebrarum". (Idol. 19:2, 14-16).  
See also Cor. 11:3, 19-20 and Nat. I 12:16, 9-12.
5. Act. Max. 2:6, 8-15; and Resurr. 8:3, 8-12.
6. Mohrmann, Les Latin des Chrétiens, Vol. 1, p.242.
7. "Malo miserandum quam erubescendum. Pulchrior est miles in pugna amissus quam in fuga saluus. Times hominem, Christiane, quem timeri oportet ab angelis, siquidem angelos iudicaturus es; quem timeri oportet a demoniis, siquidem et in daemones accepisti potestatem; quem timeri oportet ab uniuerso mundo, siquidem et in te mundus iudicatur. Christum indutus es, siquidem in Christum tinctus es, qui fugis diabolum. Depretiasti Christum, qui in te est; fugitium cum diabolo te reddidisti." (Fug. 10:2, 10-18).  
See also Fug. 9:2, 17-22.
8. Scorp. 4:5, 15 and 4:5, 17.
9. Cor. 11:1, 4-6 and Idol. 19:2, 14-15.
10. J. Helgeland, R.J. Daly and J. Patout Burns, Christians and the Military : the Early Experience, Philadelphia, 1985, p.50.
11. Helgeland, Daly and Burns, Christians and the Military, p.50.
12. Scorp. 11:2, 10-12 12:11, 12-15 and Fug. 7:2, 32-34.
13. "Nostri exercitus primum unde nomen habeant uides, deinde qui labor quantus agminis, ferre plus dimidiati mensis cibaria, ferre si quid ad usum uelint, ferre uallum; nam scutum, gladium, galeam in onere nostri milites non plus numerant quam humeros, lacertos, manus; arma enim membra militis esse dicunt ... Ex hoc ille animus in proeliis paratus ad uulnera. Adduc pari animo inexercitatum militem, mulier uidebitur. Cur tantum interest inter nouum et ueterem exercitum quantum experti sumus? Aetas tironum plerumque



- melior, sed ferre laborem, contemnere uulnus consuetudo docet." (Cicero, Tusc. Disp. II. 16:37 and II. 16:38).
14. Mart. 4:6, 36-4:6, 3, Apol. 50:6, 25-27 and Nat. I. 18:3, 25-26.
  15. Seneca, De Otio, 16:4.
  16. Nat. I. 18:3, 25-26, Apol. 50:6, 25-26 and Mart. 4:6, 2-3.
  17. "Aduersus haec non carne et sanguine, sed fide et spiritu robusto oportet adsistere." (Ieiun. 17:8, 23-25).  
"Certamini enim dedit spatium, ut et homo eadem arbitrii libertate elideret inimicum, qua succiderat illi." (Marc. II. 10:6, 3-5).
  18. Scorp. 4:5, 14-18, Apol. 50:2, 5-50:3, 13 and Mart. 1:4, 16-1:5, 25.
  19. "Sed si certaminis nomine deus nobis matyria proposuisset, per quae cum aduersario experiremur, ut, a quo libenter homo elisus est, eum iam constanter elidat, hic quoque liberalitas magis quam acerbitas dei praeest. Euulsum enim hominem de diaboli gula per fidem iam et per uirtutem inculcatorem eius uoluit efficere, ne solummodo euasisset, uerum etiam euicisset inimicum." (Scorp. 6:1, 3-9).
  20. "Ut, a quo libenter homo elisus est, eum iam constanter elidat." (Scorp. 6:1, 4-5).  
See also Marc. II. 10:6, 6-7, Fug. 1:5, 39-40 and Ieiun. 17:8, 21-23..
  21. Pat. 6:5, 21-26, Orat. 4, 17-23, Apol. 31:2, 6-11 and 37:1, 1-3.
  22. Cor. 11:4, 26-27 and Idol. 19:2, 14-17.
  23. Praes. 12:2, 4-7, Spect. 24:4, 15-17 and Cult. II. 5:4, 17-21.
  24. Apol. 50:2, 9, 50:2, 10 and 50:3, 16.
  25. Waltzing, Apol. p.143.
  26. Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution, p.372.
  27. Scorp. 4:5, 14-18.
  28. "Licet nunc et 'sarmentarios' et 'semiaxios' appelletis, quia ad stipitem dimidii axis reuincti sarmentorum ambitu exurimur. Hic est habitus uictoriae nostrae, haec palmata uestis, tali curru triumphamus!"
  29. Death pertains to "flesh" alone - Carn. 6:5, 33-36, 6:6, 39-41, Resurr. 18:5, 21-18:7, 34 and 18:11, 49-52.
  30. Idol. 19:1, 11-19:3, 25 and Cor. 11:1, 1-11:5, 43. Although Apol. 37:4, 20-23 and 42:3, 10-14 imply, at first sight, that there had been a time when Tertullian had not been opposed to Christians serving in the army, they were probably the result of his apologetic enthusiasm - an enthusiasm which caused him to overlook momentarily his distaste for military service.  
See also Waszink and Van Winden, Idol. pp.266-274 and Waltzing, Apol. p.175.
  31. Physical warfare typified the old aeon, not the new kingdom ushered in by Christ - Marc. III, 21:3, 3,8 and Iud. 3:9, 63-3:10, 78. That it had been replaced by spiritual warfare can be demonstrated by Marc. III. 14:3, 9-14:4, 21, V. 18:12, 4-8 and Fug. 9:2, 17-22.
  32. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp.253, 479 and 516, respectively.
  33. Fug. 6:1, 1-9:1, 11.



34. "Calceatus de euangelii paratura, succinctus acutiore uerbo dei ac totus de apostolo armatus". (Cor. 1:3, 19-20).
35. "Succinctus acutiore uerbo dei".
36. Cor. 1:3, 17-18 and 1:3, 18-19, respectively. Tertullian's allusion to "cloak", "shoes", "sword" and "crown" in both halves of the sentence means that it is perfectly balanced.
37. Scorp. 9:8, 11-9:10, 6 and Fug. 7:1, 9-15.
38. "Proelium est nobis, quod prouocamur ad tribunalia, ut illic sub discrimine capitis pro ueritate certemus. Victoria est autem, pro quo certaueris, obtinere."
39. "Ut de martyrii candida laurea melius coronandus donatium Christi in carcere expectat". (Cor. 1:3, 20-22).
40. Fug. 9:2, 17-22 and 10:2, 4-8.
41. Seneca, Ep. 7:3-4.
42. See note 32.
43. E. Langton, Essentials of Demonology, London, 1949, p.187.
44. "Quod si non uidetur de spiritalibus dixisse principibus, ergo de saecularibus dixit, de populo principali, utique non inter nationes, de ipsis archontibus eius, de rege Herode, etiam de Pilato, et quo maior principatus huius aeui, Romana dignitas praesidebat." (Marc. V. 6:8, 16-21).
45. Ieiun. 17:8, 20-25 and Fug. 1:5, 37-40.
46. Praes. 20:3, 9-11, 21:1, 1-3, Marc. IV. 43:9, 6-13 and Fug. 6:2, 12-19.
47. Scorp. 10:17, 21-10:17, 4, Marc. III. 14:3, 9-14:5, 28 and IV. 29:13, 10-17.
48. Ieiun. 17:8, 20-25 and Fug. 1:5, 37-40.
49. "Quo utique et alia documenta cesserunt de his qui cum diabolo apud spectacula communicando a domino exciderunt. Nemo enim potest duobus dominis seruire. Quid luci cum tenebris? Quid uitae et mortis?" (Spect. 26:4, 9-13).  
See also Uxor, II. 3:3, 22-3:4, 28, Cor. 12:5, 32-37, Anim. 16:7, 41-50 and Fug. 126, 59-62.
50. "Ceterum non leuiter in dominum peccat qui, cum aemulo eius diabolo paenitentia sua renuntiasset et hoc nomine illum domino subiecisset, rursus eundem regressu suo erigit et exultationem eius semetipsum facit, ut denuo malus recuperata praeda sua aduersus dominum gaudeat." (Paen. 5:7, 23-27).
51. F.X. Gokey, The Devil in the Apostolic Fathers, Washington, 1961, p.15.
52. Pud. 20:2, 8-20:13, 74; and Orat. 16:1, 3-6 and Pud. 10:12, 45-48, respectively.
53. Idol. 19:2, 14-17 and Cor. 11:4, 26-27.
54. Gokey, The Devil, pp.99-132.
55. Barn. Ep. 19:1a-19:1b and 21:1a-21:9c.
56. Scorp. 2:2, 10-2:14, 21, Apol. 2:12, 57-2:13, 69 and Nat. I. 2:1, 8-2:2, 16; and Apol. 50:13, 59-50:15, 70, Scorp. 13:12, 1-5 and Scap. 5:4, 20-24, respectively.
57. The Oxford Classical Dictionary, p.860.
58. Apol. 32:2, 8-12, Nat. I. 17:2, 26-29 and I. 17:6, 11-14. That Tertullian did indeed equate this "genius" with the demons can be demonstrated by Apol. 32:3, 14-16.

59. Apol. 28:3, 11-28:4, 20, 32:2, 8-32:3, 16, 33:1, 1-33:4, 21 and 34:1, 1-34:4, 20.  
See Waltzing, Apol., pp.134-145.
60. If Spect. 12:4, 12-15 and 21:3, 10-15 condemn gladiatorial combat, wrestling, boxing, running and the pankration are consumed in Spect. 18:3, 9-12, 23:7, 23-27, 18:2, 5-6 and 18:1, 1-5, respectively.
61. Rambaux, Tertullien Face aux Morales, pp.180-182.
62. Spect. 18:1, 1-5.
63. Rambaux, Tertullien Face aux Morales, pp.179-180.
64. Index Tertullianus, p.141.
65. Examples include "agon" - Fug. 1:5, 35, Mart. 4:2, 17 and Scorp. 13:10, 19; and "certamen" - Ieiun. 12:2, 22, Scorp. 6:1, 3 and Uxor. I. 3:6, 35, respectively.
66. Scorp. 6:6, 6.
67. Eph. 6:12, I Tim. 6:12, 2 Tim. 4:7 and Phil. 1:30.
68. L. Robert, "Une Vision de Perpétue Martyre à Carthage en 203", Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Paris, 1982, pp.255-256.
69. D.G. Kyle, Athletics in Ancient Athens, Leiden, 1987, p.138.
70. Epictetus warns would-be Olympic champions that among the hardships they must face is a strict and plain diet. There are, of course, reasons why an athlete must be careful about his food. Xenophon hints at one when he says that the man in training should avoid bread. Clearly the Greeks knew the danger of too much starch." (H.A. Harris, Greek Athletes and Athletics, London, 1964, p.172).
71. "Aniculae saepe inedia biduum aut triduum ferunt: subduc cibum unum diem athletae, Iouem Olympium, eum ipsum, cui se exercebit, implorabit, ferre non posse se clamabit." (Cicero, Tusc. Disp. II. 17:40).  
"There was no weight distinction in any of the contests and consequently the biggest men tended to win. To maintain the advantage of weight a high-protein diet of cheese or meat was recommended." (J. Swaddling, The Ancient Olympic Games, London, 1980, pp.58-59 - on the subject of wrestlers' diet).
72. "Si fuga urgeat, incommoda fugae caro militat; si et carcer praeueniat, caro in uinculis, caro in ligno, caro in solo, et in illa paupertate lucis et in illa absentia mundi." (Pat. 13:6, 22-25).
73. "Nempe enim et athletae segregantur ad strictiorem disciplinam, ut robori aedificando uacent". (Mart. 3:4, 29-3:4, 2).
74. "Etiam in pace labore et incommotis bellum pati iam ediscunt, in armis deambulando, campum decurrendo, fossam moliendo, testudinem densando. Sudore omnia constant, ne corpora atque animi expauescant de umbra ad solem et sole ad gelum, de tunica ad lorica, de silentio ad clamorem, de quiete ad tumultum." (Mart. 3:2, 16-21).
75. Prax. 29:7, 45-48 and Fug. 14:3, 20-24.
76. Harris, Greek Athletes and Athletics, p.151 and Kyle, Athletics, p.142.
77. Mart. 3:3, 23-24 and Fug. 1:5, 41.
78. "Itaque epistates uester Christus Iesus, qui uos spiritu unxit, et ad hoc scamma produxit, uoluit uos ante diem agonis ad duriores tractationem a liberiore

- condicione seponere, ut uires corroborarentur in uobis". (Mart. 3:4, 26-29).
79. Mart. 3:3, 24.
  80. Scorp. 6:6, 5-13.
  81. Ieiun. 17:7, 18-17:9, 27 and 12:2, 13-27.
  82. Ieiun. 17:8, 20-25.
  83. Fug. 1:4, 29-32.
  84. Scorp. 6:6, 8-10.
  85. Harris, Greek Athletes and Athletics, p.36.
  86. Mart. 3:3, 24-25, Scorp. 13-10, 20-21 and Cor. 15:1, 2-5.
  87. Crowns were placed upon idols (Cor. 7:4, 25-7:7, 55), the dead (Cor. 10:2, 7-9), the priests and the worshippers of the pagan gods (Cor. 10:9, 55-57), magistrates (Cor. 13:1, 1-9), soldiers (Cor. 1:1, 2-4) and slaves when they were being manumitted (Cor. 13:5, 29).
  88. "Dare huic palmam, huic honorem, illi ciuitatem, illi stipendia?"
  89. "Sed, quantum liuores illi et cruores et uibices negotiantur, intende: coronas scilicet et gloriam et dotem, priuilegia publica, stipendia ciuica, imagines, statuas et, qualem potest praestare saeculum, de fama aeternitatem, de memoria resurrectionem." (Scorp. 6:4, 22-26).  
Spect. 22:2, 3-11 demonstrates that both athletes and actors were normally excluded from the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship.
  90. "Quia occidit ille, meruit ut hoc pateretur; tu quid meruisti miser, ut hoc spectes? 'Occide, uerbera, ure! Quare tam timide incurrit in ferrum? Quare parum audacter occidit? Quare parum libenter moritur? Plagis agatur in uulnera, mutuos ictus nudis et obuuiis pectoribus excipiant." (Seneca, Ep. 7:5).
  91. "Odisse debemus istos conuentus et coetus ethnicorum, quoniam illic nomen dei blasphematur, illic in nos quotidiani leones expostulantur, inde persecutiones decernuntur, inde temptationes emittuntur." (Spect. 27:1, 1-4).
  92. Spect. 18:2, 5-6.
  93. Spect. 18:3, 9-12.
  94. Spect. 23:7, 23-27, Scorp. 6:5, 1-5 and 6:3, 18-20.
  95. Spect. 12:4, 12-15, 21:3, 10-15 and Scorp. 6:3, 18-20.
  96. Spect. 16:1, 1-16:2, 11.
  97. Spect. 18:1, 2-5 and Scorp. 6:3, 18-20.
  98. "The chief difference between the pankration and ordinary or 'upright' wrestling, as the Greeks called it, was that, whereas in the latter the aim was to throw the opponent, in the pankration the object was to bring him to a point where he was compelled to admit defeat, as in boxing. This could be done by treating the bout as if it were a boxing match; a better and more scientific way was to secure a hold on the opponent such that if he did not surrender he would be throttled or have a limb broken or a joint dislocated; the parallel with modern judo is obvious." (Harris, Greek Athletes and Athletics, p.106).
  99. Robert, "Une Vision de Perpétue Martyre à Carthage en 203" pp.255-256.
  100. Swaddling, Ancient Olympic Games, p.60.
  101. *ibid*, p.61.

102. *ibid*, p.60.
103. Fug. 10:3, 24-31 and Scorp. 9:8, 11-17.
104. "Sanguinem hominis deus concupiscit? Et tamen ausim dicere, si et homo regnum dei, si et homo certam salutem, si et homo secundam regenerationem. Nulla compensatio inuidiosa est in qua aut gratiae aut iniuriarum communis est ratio." (Scorp. 6:11, 19-23).
105. Swaddling, The Ancient Olympic Games, p.63 and J.P. Thuillier, Les Jeux Athlétiques dans la Civilisation Étrusque, Rome, 1985, pp.257 and 265.
106. Harris, Greek Athletes and Athletics, p.99.
107. *ibid*, p.99.
108. Swaddling, Ancient Olympic Games, p.64.
109. Harris, Greek Athletes and Athletics, p.99.
110. Swaddling, Ancient Olympic Games, p.63.
111. *ibid*, p.64.
112. *ibid*, p.64.
113. Thuillier, Les Jeux Athlétiques, p.265.
114. *ibid*, p.257.
115. Harris, Greek Athletes and Athletics, p.97.
116. Swaddling, Ancient Olympic Games, pp.58-59.
117. *ibid*, p.57.
118. Harris, Greek Athletes and Athletics, p.103.
119. "Put your hip alongside his and grasp his head with your right. - You, throw both arms around him. - You, get under his grip. - You, push your foot between his and close with him. - You, get your right under him. - You, grip the hand he is getting under you and thrust your left down on his flank. - You, push him back with your left. - You, reverse your feet and close with him." (*ibid*, pp.103-104).
120. The fact that the demons and fallen angels were endowed with corporeality (albeit a spiritual one) is confirmed by Carn. 6:9, 56-60), where Tertullian observed that the heavenly host possessed a spiritual corporeality.
121. Apol. 22:6, 25-30.
122. "In both versions of wrestling, tripping was allowed but biting and gouging were forbidden (gouging meant digging the fingers into the eyes, mouth or any tender part of the body)." (Swaddling, Ancient Olympic Games, p.57).
123. Marc. V. 17:7, 15-17:8, 1 and V. 18:12, 4-8.
124. "Serua deo rem suam in attaminatam. Ille eam, si uolet, coronabit. Immo et uult; denique inuitat: 'Qui, uicerit', inquit, 'dabo ei coronam uitae'. Esto et tu 'fidelis ad mortem, decerta' et tu 'bonum agonem', cuius coronam et apostolus repositam sibi merito confidit." (Cor. 15:1, 1-5).  
See also Mart. 3:3, 23-26.
125. "As runners on the track, leaping forward from the start and urging their swift limbs ever on and on, raise clouds of dust in their eagerness to reach the distant post; each of them longs to win through to the finish to receive the sweet reward of success, to force his way first to the line and place on his brow the victor's wreath." (Oppian, Haliēutica. IV. 101 - see Harris, Greek Athletes and Athletics, p.74).
126. "Expectabimus nunc et amphitheatri repudium de scripturis? Si saeuitiam, si impietatem si feritatem permissam nobis contendere possumus, eamus in



- amphitheatrum. Si tales sumus quales dicimur, delectemur sanguine humano." (Spect. 19:1, 1-5).
127. Pat. 13:8, 30-35, Scorp. 1:11, 11-12, Anim. 1:6, 39-48 and Apol. 12:3, 12-12:4, 19.
128. Rambaux, Tertullien Face aux Morales, p.183.
129. Scorp. 6:1, 3-6.
130. Marc. II. 10:6, 3-7.
131. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, p.173.
132. Anim. 27:2, 5-27:4, 23 and 27:5, 27-27:9, 57.
133. Scorp. 6:1, 7.
134. Marc. II. 10:6, 4.
135. Scorp. 5:12, 25.
136. Scorp. 6:1, 3-9 and Marc. II. 10:6, 3-9.
137. Pat. 5:15, 49-5:25, 92.
138. T. Fry, The Rule of St. Benedict, Collegeville, 1981, p.14.
139. Spect. 4:6, 2-5 and Idol. 6:1, 22-6:2, 26.
140. "Nos igitur, qui domino cognito etiam aemulum eius inspeximus, qui institutore comperto et interpolatorem una deprehendimus, nec mirari neque dubitare oportet: cum ipsum hominem, opus et imaginem dei, totius uniuersitatis possessorem, illa uis interpolatoris et aemulatoris angeli ab initio de integritate deiecerit, uniuersam substantiam eius pariter cum ipso integritati institutam pariter cum ipso in peruersitatem demutauit aduersus institutorem, ut, quam doluerat homini concessam, non sibi, in ea ipsa et hominem reum deo faceret et suam dominationem collocaret." (Spect. 2:12, 59-69).  
See also Spect. 2:7, 30-2:1-, 53, 8:9, 33-35, 15:8, 27-29, Cult. I. 8:2, 6-8:3, 17 and Praes. 40:2, 2-40:7, 21.
141. Spect. 2:8, 34-2:9, 44, 2:10, 44-53 and Cult. I. 8:2, 5-8:6, 28.
142. "Immo et quae iusta sunt caro non amittit per curam ecclesiae et agapen fratrum; et insuper quae semper utilia fidei, spiritus adipiscitur: non uides alienos deos, non imaginibus eorum incurris, non sollemnes nationum dies ipsa commixtione participas, non nidoribus spurcis uerberaris, non clamoribus spectaculorum, atrocitate uel furore uel impudicitia celebrantium caederis; non in loca libidinum publicarum oculi tui impingunt: uacas a scandalis, a temptationibus, a recordationibus malis, iam et a persecutione."
143. Praes. 40:2, 2-5, Spect. 2:7, 30-32, 2:12, 60-62, Cult. I. 8:2, 10-11, Test. 3:2, 7-10 and Anim. 1:5, 32-35.
144. J.H. Waszink, "Pompa Diaboli", Vig. Christ., 1, 1947, p.19.
145. Scorp. 4:5, 15-18 and Apol. 50:2, 7-11.
146. Ieiun. 17:8, 20-25, Fug. 1:5, 37-1:6, 42 and Scorp. 6:1, 3-9.
147. Anim. 16:7, 41-50 and Pud. 19:19, 86-19:20, 93.
148. Marc. V. 17:7, 15-17:8, 1.
149. Idol. 6:2, 25-26, Spect. 4:2, 5-6, 4:3, 8-13 and Cor. 13:7, 44-51.  
See Waszink, "Pompa Diaboli", pp.13-41.
150. Gokey, The Devil in the Apostolic Fathers, p.50.
151. Daniélou, Origins, p.411.
152. Anim. 11:1, 1-11:2, 17, 11:3, 21-29, 9:7, 56-63 and Marc. II. 4:4, 11-13.

153. Anim. 39:1, 4-39:2, 13.
154. Waltzing, Apol. p.107.
155. Apol. 22:3, 10-13.
156. Having asserted that lasciviousness is a prominent characteristic of the theatre (Spect. 10:4, 11-13) Spect. 10:12, 45-49, 10:6, 24-10:8, 33 and 26:1, 1-26:3, 9 cast the demons in the role of the theatre's patrons. Having noted that Socrates was inspired by a demon (Anim. 1:4, 29-32) Anim. 1:6, 42-43 claims that he corrupted boys.
157. Uirg. 7:2, 14-25, Orat. 22:5, 38-49 and Cult. I. 2:3, 22-2:4, 32.
158. Apol. 22:5, 20-25.
159. "Suae saltem ignominiae et damnationis notam refutent: renuant se immundos spiritus esse, quod uel ex pabulis eorum, sanguine et fumo et putidis rogis pecorum et impuratisissimis linguis ipsorum uatum intellegi debuit." (Apol. 23:14, 72-75).  
See Apol. 22:6, 25-30.
160. Scorp. 9:8, 11-9:10, 6, 11:1, 6-11:2, 14 and Fug. 7:1, 7-15.
161. Bapt. 16:1, 1-16:2, 10 and Scorp. 6:9, 9-11, 18.
162. Apol. 22:6, 25-30, 23:4, 20-23:10, 54 and 23:14, 72-75.
163. Apol. 50:13, 59-50:15, 70, Scap. 5:4, 20-24 and Scorp. 13:12, 1-5.
164. Apol. 22:5, 47-48.
165. Apol. 27:5, 19-27:7, 33.  
See Waltzing, Apol. pp.180-182.
166. Wiedemann, Greek and Roman Slavery, pp.201, 203, 204 and 177 respectively.
167. "The 'flatus' Dei is, for him (Tertullian), the principle which animates all living things, but it varies in quality. There is, in other words a difference in kind between the 'flatus' which animates the animals, the 'flatus' which animates the angels and the 'flatus' which animates men, the latter being the highest (Adv. Marc. II, 8, 2). It is this 'flatus' which makes man into the image of God, that is of the 'spiritus'." (Daniélou, Origins, p.375).
168. Anim. 16:1, 1-16:2, 19, 16:7, 41-50 and 41:1, 1-41:2, 13.
169. Prax. 29:7, 45-48 and Fug. 14:3, 20-24.
170. Marc. II. 8:2, 7-13, II. 10:1, 3-11 and III. 9:7, 4-9.
171. Marc. V. 17:8, 27-17:9, 5 and V. 11:11, 18-22.
172. "Igitur natales inpatientiae in ipso diabolo deprehendo, iam tunc cum dominum deum uniuersa opera sua quae fecisset imagini suae, id est homini, subiecisse inpatienter tulit. Nec enim doluisset si sustinuisset nec enim inuidisset homini si non doluisset: adeo deceptus eum quia inuiderat, inuiderat autem quia doluerat, doluerat quia patienter utique non tulerat. Quid primum fuerit ille angelus perditionis, malus an inpatientis, contemno quaerere, cum palam sit aut inpatientiam ab malitia aut malitiam ab inpatientia auspicatam deinde inter se conspirasse et indiuiduas in uno patris sinu adoleuisse." (Pat. 5:5, 16-5:7, 26).
173. "Et tamen illae cicatrices Christiano proelio insculptae et utique inuidiosae apud Christum, quia uicisse cupierunt, et sic quoque gloriosae, quia non uincendo cesserunt, inuas adhuc et diabolus ipse suspirat, cum sua infelicitate, sed casta, cum



- paenitentia maerente, sed non erubesciente ad dominum, de uenia denuo dimittetur reis, cum piaculariter negauerunt." (Pud. 22:15, 65-71).
174. Carn. 17:5, 31-17:6, 46, Mart. 1:5, 21-23, Idol. 5:4, 9-13 and Marc. III. 18:7, 22-27.
  175. Cor. 7:8, 55-58, Prax. 1:1, 70-1:3, 20 and Marc. II. 10:1, 3-10:2, 13.
  176. "He (Satan) is not really a demon but one of the 'angels' of the court of Yahweh like the other 'sons of God', amongst whom he seems to fill the function of public accuser. His 'roaming the earth and patrolling it' is probably inserted to show what Satan did nothing without God's permission, if not by his delegation." (Gokey, The Devil, p.2).
  177. Spect. 16:2, 6-16:3, 11 and Marc. II. 10:3, 15.
  178. Jb. 1:16 and 2:1.
  179. Jb. 1:9-11 and 2:4-5.
  180. Paen. 5:7, 23-5:8, 29, 7:7, 23-7:9, 34, Pat. 5:3, 6-5:8, 29, Praes. 40:2, 2-40:8, 25 and Spect. 2:12, 59-69.
  181. J.B. Russel, The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity, p.203.
  182. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp.450, 460, 514 and 517, respectively.
  183. See note 32.
  184. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp.460, 514, 517, 524, 538 and 539, respectively.
  185. *ibid*, Vol. 1, pp.478-479, 508, 532-533 and 533-534, respectively.
  186. *ibid*, Vol. 1, pp.66-67, 174, 174, 261, 398 and 530, respectively.
  187. *ibid*, Vol. 1, p.462.
  188. Apol. 22:3, 10-13, Uirg. 7:2, 14-25, Cult. I 2:3, 22-2:4, 32 and Orat. 22:5, 38-49.
  189. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, pp.433 and 505, respectively.
  190. Rom. 8:31-34.
  191. Uxor. I. 3:6, 35-44, Scorp. 13:1, 16-20, 13:10, 15-22 and Fug. 10:1, 4-7.
  192. Biblia Patristica, Vol. 1, p.69.
  193. "Si persecutionis uel maxime exitus aut uitam afferunt aut mortem, aut plagam aut sanationem, habes auctorem eiusdem: 'ego percutiam et sanabo, ego uiuificabo et mortificabo'." (Fug. 3:1, 8-11).
  194. Anim. 35:3, 24-36.
  195. J. Daniélou, Les Anges et leur Mission, Paris, 1953, pp.127-128.
  196. Barnes, Tertullian, p.171.
  197. Ignatius Trall. 4:2, 3-7, Mart. Loug. 1:16, 11-13, Mart. Pol. 2:1, 16-3:2, 21, Pass. Perp. 4:3, 12-4:4, 19 and 10:6, 1-10:11, 19.  
See F.J. Dolger, "Das Martyrium als Kampf mit dem Teufel", Ant. Christ. 3, 1933, pp.177-188.